

VINTAGE YEARS

1940

With loving thanks
to

My Grandson

ROBERT SEYMOUR DONALD STUART

With whom I have never had a cross word since
the day he was born, twelve months ago.

1942

Here may I observe that I had only just commenced this strange eventful history when war was declared, and as the national work I was given necessitated among other things my journeying to Palestine, Egypt, The Rhodesias, and from Nairobi to Cape Town via the Copper Belt, and nearly every town large and small in Africa, I was obliged to continue writing it at intervals in convoys, in trains, on aeroplanes and on the hinges of my trunk. I mention these uninteresting facts to explain why this book has taken me exactly two years to complete.

From the foregoing it will be gathered that Mr. Stuart is now grown up.

He is three!!!

We still get on extremely well, but the way he seems to doubt the value of any slight suggestions I venture to make has created an impression in my mind that he has come to the conclusion he knows more than I do.

Frankly, I think he's right.

VINTAGE YEARS

when

KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH
WAS PRINCE OF WALES

By

SEYMOUR HICKS

Author of "Me and My Missus" and "Night Lights"



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VINTAGE YEARS

GENTLE READER !!!—though why any reader should be called gentle I have yet to discover, for those whom I've watched have as a rule been frowning—I take it that there is little need for me to inform you that every book must have a beginning.

This, of course, as a person of great experience, you have discovered long ago.

However, there is one thing about this very necessary effort on an author's part which perhaps you have never quite appreciated, and that is the enormous difficulty there is of at once striking the right note—as the inebriated trombone player observed to his conductor. To immediately arrest the attention is of the most vital importance, for more often than not it is on the first few lines of a submitted manuscript that a Publisher's much-to-be-pitied reader (probably a person with the secret vice of literary longings) advises its acceptance or rejection.

Then it must be remembered that a brilliant public, fed to the teeth with paper-backs, morocco and half-calf—glutted with these as are the gaudily speckled trout in "the fools' fortnight," often make a practice of idly scanning page 1 and deciding on the instant whether or no their prospective purchase holds out any hope of laughter or a thrill.

Obviously this does not apply to the work of those giants whose names are household words, for they are in the enviable position of being able to write exactly what they like and how they like, certain that their millions of admirers will read into an ornate platitude a much-to-be-cherished epigram, into an involved metaphor a thought as clear as the cloudless sky beneath which Cleopatra trained her asp to do his stuff "on the morning after," and also into the six asterisks which follow an unfinished sentence the discovery of a solution which their idol himself failed to find for a fantastically impossible situation. I am alluding to the hundreds of men and women who, like myself, have little or no reputation; but in doing so I would not have you think for a moment that this preamble is in any sense an apology or an excuse, so often to be found in a preface, which is as a rule the same thing. All I want to convey

is that, having written this book, I have read it with the greatest possible pleasure. I hope that in stating this fact I shall not be accused of being unduly prejudiced, for that would be ridiculous. I mention it purely for your comfort.

And here I make a confession: I have long ago ceased to buy books of any kind, as I have so many friends who are collectors, but I did buy and pay for this one because I felt it would give me the right to condemn it—uncut. However, far from this being the case, I have read it, as I say, with delight and, may I add, several times.

This you will probably think is amazing—but you would be quite wrong, though at the same time there is something truly remarkable connected with “the Birth of this Opal.” It is difficult to believe, but the critics, a body of the most distinguished men to be found in any walk of life, have for the first time in their careers been absolutely unanimous and have showered columns of unstinted praise on these affectionate memories of my never-to-be-forgotten Nineties. Had this not been so, I should have hesitated to ask you to read a few extracts from some of their notices in our best-known British Journals, but after some thought on the subject I have decided to insist on your doing so, certain that this kindly act on your part will serve a double purpose. In the first place, you will be in no doubt as to whether or no you have invested your money wisely, and secondly, that in having acquired a copy of perhaps the only edition of a classic you will be glad that your mind has been made up for you, thereby relieving you of any undue mental strain.

If I could blush I would, but as in these sophisticated days such flights of fancy are relegated to the inmost recesses of the vanity bags so dear to the cheeks of veteran *ingénues*, I can only beg you to *forgive me*, to *read me* and to *congratulate me*.

Are these not wonderful?

The Literary Appendix says: “This book should be read by everyone who knows nothing. It is bound to appeal to a vast public.”

The Distillers' Weekly says: “It is full of the most drinkable split infinitives.”

The Editor of *The Highbrow* writes: “Controversial, provocative and profoundly inaccurate, it is an ideal book for

really unpleasant people. It will enable them to argue in mixed company and become more unpopular still. It should have a large sale."

The Chemists' Digest says: "Mental cleanliness first. The author should be well shaken before taken."

Animal Life—A critic who signs himself The Insect says: "It is decidedly lively and hops from pillow to post, tickling the fancies of young and old alike."

In the *Law of the Land*, a Barrister writes: "We wish more space was available and that we were permitted to say what we really think of it."

In *Ring Craft*, a heavy-weight leader-writer concludes by saying: "Still, no one can deny that his knowledge of everything else is unbelievable."

While that instructive Turf Journal *Winners while you Wait*, the real friend of all racegoers, which for years has encouraged its subscribers to sing as they walk home with their shirts missing, says:

"*Vintage Years* is full of delicate, subtle charm and gentle graciousness. I prophesy that it will become the bible of the Silver Ring. No bookmaker should be without it."

But here I stop, for it would be unfair to ask you to gaze on acres and acres of gilded lilies. Please believe me when I tell you that gentlemen of the Press have all spread themselves, and I tender to them my grateful thanks, for had they not been so generous, how easily could they have taken the wind out of my sales!

Though it is undeniably a task of considerable magnitude even for a scholar, however profound, to buy pens, ink and paper for the purpose of either making an Apology in six volumes for the birth of every nation but his own, or of writing a Life from the cradle to the grave of a maiden aunt by marriage of Rameses the Second—and if these two subjects present slight difficulties, he should attempt to prove beyond doubt that Bacon was Anne Hathaway's lover and that the price of her virtue and Shakespeare's silence was that William should get the credit for His Lordship's

works and sign them in his own bold hand; still, the fact must not be lost sight of that these full-time jobs make history, and that the historian is permitted to deal with them in the dulllest possible manner.

Indeed, it is the privilege of the historian to be dull, and should he fail to succeed in gaining full marks for this not very difficult feat, the intelligentsia who borrow books from their local library would be really very, very annoyed.

So much, then, for the historian! His public expect nothing of him except that, if possible, he should be duller than themselves.

But think of the Herculean task of the minor chronicler. It is imperative that he should be amusing. The centuries are not for him to span. He is given perhaps only two decades to hug to his bosom, and those of a transition period which depends not on the beginning, the middle and the end of a stated epoch, but on detail, the birth and origin of which may be obscure to the reader unless he promotes the chronicler to the rank of historian and decorates him with the Order of Saint Dull of the First Class.

M'Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Members of the various lending libraries and similar institutions, not excluding those who may be weak-minded enough to *buy* this book:

As a Remembrancer of the Nineties my difficulty is that I find these wonderful Vintage Years sometimes remain extremely faithful to the Eighties, and also that the Ninety-Fours often divorce the Eighty-Nines after having lived with them very little longer than the time agreed upon in the invisible ink of a Hollywood Marriage Contract. That being so, it became abundantly clear to me that the judicial separation of periods closely allied to each other was for a happy-go-lucky October-geranium, as a schoolboy once described a gentleman of eighty, an almost impossible task. Indeed, had I not spent the money I was paid in advance by my Publishers for this instructive effort, I should have returned it to them and torn up the first fifteen thousand words I had written. Owing, however, to the world-wide war (a circumstance over which, believe me, I have little or no control) this became impossible, and therefore I was compelled to fling more ink upon my troubled waters. The reason why I am now being slightly apologetic is to save those who lived in the Nineties—if there are such people still about—shocks when they discover I mention things unconnected with those ten Vintage Years so brimful of happiness. On second

thoughts, however, why should I manufacture a wheel on which to break a butterfly?

At best, this book is only an endeavour to try and pass pleasantly a few hours of their not, I expect, very valuable time, and therefore I am not going to pretend that I shall be greatly upset if I am hauled over the coals for anything—with the exception, of course, of glaring anachronisms.

Before plunging into this colourful work I should be more than pleased if you would not take the following few pages as a sample of what follows. I know you will find them a trifle stodgy—I did myself—but when later I am leading you, I hope happily, up an old-world garden path I am sure you will see how necessary they are as a foundation or, shall we say, as an ironing-board on which the fabrics woven fifty years ago should be carefully laid. Between ourselves, they are my excuse for not electing to swim in the deep waters of analytical criticism, as I am quite conscious that, buffeted about in the angry sea of reasoned debate, I should drown ignominiously. Still, though I am content to deal only with amusing facts and simple conditions, it must not be assumed that I lived in ignorance of the greater happenings taking place in the last hours of a dying century.

It is not the purpose of this presumably light-hearted trifle to delve deeply into the grub, chrysalis and butterfly stage of the new thought in Art, Literature and Experiment of the Nineties, but because these years were only an awakening and not ones of absolute achievement they must by no means be considered as of little account. Indeed, potentially they were of immense value.

It is true that the building of the house had to await the coming of a new century, but the hands of the Nineties held the trowel that so well and truly laid the foundations of the Palace of Progress soon to be erected on a site which for nearly three decades had only been tilled by the orthodox implements of conventional thought.

In 1890 the children of a drowsy giant who had been content to have all he needed brought to him by age-old servants suddenly became restive. Eager to fend for themselves, they severed the bonds which bound them to a complacent epoch, and so, rejoicing in their emancipation, gained freedom of thought and the power of experimental endeavour.

Many an arrow was shot into the air never to be seen again as it sped its way into the blue of a dawning day, but the thong of

their newly fashioned bow was heard to twang many a time and oft as Youth, seizing Opportunity, gradually "found" itself, and very soon was able to shoot with unerring precision at a target of Hope and Ambition which it had only seen dimly lit on a far distant horizon.

Man and maid, with that unquestioning courage which is their most priceless possession, dashed into fragments the chains which so long had held them captive. In this New Age the minor poets raised their voices in passionate song; literature and the drama searched the heights and, no longer satisfied with the formulas of old, planted the signpost of a new art which pointed to a road paved with emotional individualism.

The brush of the painter wooed nature upon a wider canvas, and the imaginative new technique of the musician sought other fugues and counter-melodies with which to embroider the basic themes of the masters.

The Arts and Crafts gathered fresh flowers from the borders of gardens the gates of which they had opened with a stolen key, while the inventor and the scientist strove to harness a new mechanism for man's use, not only upon the earth itself and beneath its waters but even in the air.

The Nineties were indeed the nursery of a New Age, and though idealists were compelled to grope their way in the darkness of a fruition period, it must not be forgotten that the weakly infants they cared for so tenderly are the sturdy and well-nigh perfect specimens of to-day. It is not in the power of this humble chronicler of trivial things to trace transition from its source or to discuss the merits of the mighty ships that sailed a new-found river towards an ocean where they will rest at anchor for all time. His is only to ask those of to-day to realize how grateful they should be to the pioneering Nineties, for it was then that a host of real masters were building a causeway for them on which they could march armed with new weapons to lands of greater promise.

As changes in all forms of art, whether they make for greater beauty or greater daring, or both, are an upheaval, and therefore, as a rule, definitely spectacular, it must not be forgotten that though in the Nineties literature found new methods of expression, the harp new chords to strike, painting new hues, and terpsichore new

forms for our enchantment, in many other directions the new which made for the nation's good and lasting benefit came into being at this time. It was thus, for instance, with the Salvation Army—a new movement which may well be called a new religion, or, at any rate, in its form new. It is incredible to think that during the early Nineties this power for good was unrecognized, the beauty of its inspiration unsung, and, worse than all, its great endeavour held up to ridicule.

Its place of worship was beneath the open sky in by-ways and at street corners. Here all the earnest disciples of William Booth, conscious of the greatness of their leader, braved the gibes of the vulgar and the sneers of the unthinking. Detached from all this as we are to-day, it is now possible to realize what a Herculean task this saintly man had set himself. His not only to win the unbelieving to his banner, but to rescue the souls of people who in the misery of their surroundings were unaware that for them a God existed.

Many other social battles of the “new” were then raging, and one destined to have far-reaching results was the fight for Woman's Emancipation.

This, however, was a fight won by violent methods. No doubt the means justified the end, but at the time the nation as a whole stood dumbfounded as it watched the female champions of a great cause cast aside their femininity to become the successful rivals of the East End hooligan.

Among those who had decided not to remain for ever the docile descendants of women who had been content never to question laws laid down for them by a thousand Mr. Barretts of a thousand Wimpole Streets were many ladies of culture. They were subjected to every kind of indignity, for not only were they lampooned in the Press, ridiculed in song and story and hustled in the streets, but they were even sentenced by visionless Dogberrys who, open-eyed and horror-struck, sought to crush the spirit of a movement which their text-book brains were incapable of appreciating.

Still, nothing daunted, these women of unswerving purpose fought on. Persecution they knew to be their most powerful weapon, publicity their needed pulpit, and so, marshalling their forces in a well-prepared form of attack, they at last gained a sympathetic hearing from our people, who have ever prided themselves on being a fair-play nation.

As was to be expected, an element easy to enlist but difficult to govern entered the fray. These were the wild women known as the Militant Suffragettes. They smashed shop windows, assaulted policemen, chained themselves to railings and created disturbances of every sort and kind. They demonstrated at theatres, and on one occasion gained access to the House of Commons and showered leaflets on the Members from the Strangers' Gallery. One of their number deliberately sacrificed her life on Derby Day by throwing herself in front of the horses as they rounded Tattenham Corner, shouting as her last words, "Votes for Women." It is only natural that at first these activities alienated many who were sympathetically inclined, but at last the day was won and equality for women became an established fact.

It is sad to think that the bludgeon was needed to herald the coming of the Bloomer. To-day the word "bloomer" is used to signify in polite slang "a mistake." In the Nineties it was the defiant gesture of the New Woman. She showed her independence by showing her legs, and the grandmamas of the day made certain that England was going to the dogs. Women had shown the male what no gentleman, who was a gentleman, ever dreamed she possessed. A pair of legs!! This was a solecism which for a considerable time Society refused to pardon.

It is scarcely to be wondered at, perhaps, that those who have lived long enough to watch the once uncertain steps of children become charged with that winged power which gives to the Marathon runners Victory, should be slightly critical of the mood and manner of the winners as, standing triumphant, they hold on high their well-earned trophies, and were it not for the cleansing years of war through which we are now passing, well might the onlooker deplore the vanished gentleness of fifty years ago.

However, the rouge, the lipstick, chain-smoking and the cocktail, to say nothing of the dreadful "shorts" which clothed so unattractively the straddled legs of apparently unconscious young ladies, have proved to be little more than very venial sins, for when their country called, Britain found that her wonder women had hearts which beat steady and true beneath many a coloured tunic.

That the clothes of pretty young people in the Nineties completely covered a multitude of skins may certainly have been the cause of cramping the approach shots of many an ardent swain, and was the reason, no doubt, that free-and-easy proposals of

marriage were as a rule extremely rare, long tennis skirts and voluminous bathing dresses being of such protective designs that they certainly left everything to the imagination of their male companions. These relics of a heavily chaperoned age—especially the serge bathing costumes, which consisted of loose blouses buttoned up to the throat and reaching almost to the knees, hiding extremely baggy knickerbockers—made swimming impossible for the majority of women. Indeed, so successfully did these garments conceal the female form divine that even those edible little dainties the shrimps had no cause to blush a delicate pink until they found themselves in really hot water. Mixed bathing was unheard of, and the machines in which men and women undressed were placed at a considerable distance from each other. These were drawn by horses breast-high into the surf, an arrangement which made Mrs. Grundy doubly certain that no idle thoughts could be indulged in.

However, although maiden modesty in the long ago was carried even to the point of aggravating indecency, it gave to the youthful bridegroom, as he untied the silken threads that so long had held securely the delicious gift which Dame Nature had presented him with, a thrill which one may be sure he would not have exchanged for "The jewel that the Bourbons lost."

It would be quite absurd and nobody but a congenital idiot would endeavour to try and find reasons for any given period being less moral or more immoral than the years that followed or preceded it. It is more than probable that, human nature being what it is, the desires of men and women have always been alike from the day that Eve opened a fruiterer's shop and persuaded Adam to become her first customer. Therefore, to endeavour to discover whether Cupid in the Nineties was more haphazard in the way he used his slings or shot his arrows than he is to-day would be a waste of time. The reactions of love may be varied, but the cause being the same it can only be the effect which is different, and therefore all that can be said about the affairs of the heart in any age is, that they are "sex of one and half a dozen of the other."

A thing, however, that cannot be denied is that fifty years ago marriage was looked upon as a much more binding and serious business than it is in this year of Grace, owing to the fact that the cocktail bar is now the anteroom of the registrar's office, and that modern parents more often than not get the first intimation of their daughter's wedding through the columns of the Society

paragraphist who earns a precarious livelihood by retailing the gossip of fashionable resorts or the doings of the intellectually precious whose faces are not the only part of their anatomy which they delight to exhibit free gratis and for nothing, in those pages of the newspapers de luxe which were once the exclusive property of the artist's model.

It is possible that the present fashion of seaside sun-bathing, where all sorts and sizes of human beings lie together, cheek by cheek, giving a perfect imitation of a fishmonger's slab, is what caused an overworked Divorce Court Judge, whose duty consisted of granting decrees nisi by the score, to sigh heavily and murmur, "Dear, dear, if Holy Bedlock were only made a really difficult proceeding there would probably be no divorces at all." Though in making this very sound remark this learned man must have forgotten that if this were so, like Othello, his occupation would be gone.

Who, I wonder, was the unknowledgeable jackass that labelled as "naughty" a period famed for the vitality of its men, and the beauty of its women, and the red blood that ran riot through the veins of a great and virile nation? I do not think that I am wrong in supposing that the word was deliberately chosen as a gibe by a present-day Casanova, who, paying uddage at the modern milk bar, feared that his timid little excursions into the arms of his Eton-crop Venus would fade into insignificance if she had as his background the never-to-be-forgotten personalities who loved with their hearts and not their heads, laughed unrestrainedly from their bellies and were by no means averse to arguing with their fists in those glorious years of which the Eighties were the parents.

Still, although his meaningless jest was designed to belittle a past of which he knew nothing, and to gild a present which may possibly be described just as stupidly by one of his descendants in the years to come, let us thank this thoughtless verbal coiner, for he has encouraged those who were of a great era to think backwards and revel in the memory of wonderful days and nights unhappily gone beyond recall.

Indeed, the Nineties were not only jolly but truly wonderful, the peak years of that British prosperity which commenced in 1850, when the Income Tax was only eightpence in the pound,

years when everybody lived happy and content in comfort and security.

The purchasing power of the sovereign in the Nineties was about seventeen shillings, and the prices of nearly all commodities were within the reach of even the by no means over-paid Middle Classes. Labour was cheap, clothes at the best tailors cost less than half what they do to-day, tradesmen of all kinds being content with a fair profit. Stalls at the theatre were only 10s. 6d.; to keep a racehorse in training cost little more than £3 a week, to hire a hack for the Park, £2 a week, or to feed an animal in one's own stable 13s. 6d. for seven days. The wages of an exceptionally good professed cook were only a pound a week, while sixpence as a tip where to-day a shilling is expected was considered ample.

The charges in restaurants were ridiculously small; Oysters were only 3s. 6d. a dozen, whisky 3s. 6d. a bottle, a quart of the finest brand of champagne no more than 10s. 6d., while boots in Bond Street were to be obtained for 30s. or two guineas, and prices for luxuries and necessities were all upon this scale.

Here one may add that if any lady had thought of paying more than 20 or 25 guineas at the smartest establishment in the West End for an evening gown the seller would have been arrested for burglary and the buyer—certified.

The happy and contented spirit met with everywhere made not for the tightening of purse-strings but, on the contrary, the loosening of them. Credit was offered, not sought. The running of accounts was encouraged, and any man about Town who had thought of sending a cheque to his tailor for the full amount of his account would certainly have run the risk of being arrested for causing the worthy man's premature death from shock. Even the money-lenders did not ask to see gilt-edge securities for their 70 per cent. accommodation, and this being so, the temporarily embarrassed were generally in funds.

These were the really grand Nineties, when had anyone suggested for a moment that prices would rise to their present fantastic heights he would have been locked up as a dangerous lunatic. It is strange to remember how in these beyond words happy days no one ever stopped to think how tremendously lucky and well off they were.

In writing of the times which preceded the First Great War by only a dozen years or so, of its people and its pleasures, it is not to

draw comparisons or invite criticism. I have but one object in view, and that is to perform a mild literary operation—the severing of the word “naughty” from healthy tissue.

Let the Nineties be called wicked if you like, disreputable if you will, unmoral and immoral—though none of these words describe those Vintage Years—but whatever name we elect to pin upon their old-fashioned clothes, for heaven’s sake let us not qualify for an asylum by using the word “naughty.”

I hope I am not being too optimistic if I say that when you have wandered in your mind’s eye with me through London as it used to be, wandered down thoroughfares long since swept away, visited its doubtful class of night clubs and less reputable night houses, sat with the Chairmen of the City’s somewhat garishly decorated music halls where “The Bloods” were granted the privilege of buying non-vintage champagne for those paste-bejewelled important persons as they listened to the good honest Rabelaisian jokes flung thick and fast from leather-throated comedians; and then during the Jubilee Year, having elected yourself a member of that famous club, the Empire Lounge, where the fair and the frail became your companions of the early hours in a Wood called after St. John (though there is no real proof that this respectable gentleman ever lived there), and the next day having found yourself on nodding acquaintance with great Statesmen, great Soldiers, great Painters, great Singers, great Actors, Pugilists who made history, Jockeys who revolutionized the style of even the mighty Archer, and having laid your heart at the feet of ladies who were the favourites of Royal Personages, laughed at the Wits, admired the daring and found excuses for those who were inordinately cunning, *IF* (and I say this with apologies to that Englishman of Englishmen, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who gave to Britain that loveliest of all sermons, his immortal “*IF*” verse, which, if learned thankfully and its beauty reverently observed, will never fail to guide youth into the Primrose Path of Truth and make those who have lingered in the byways good and really gentle men), *IF* you do not relegate the word “naughty” to the nursery or use it in describing the behaviour of some incautious or over-inquisitive *ingénue*, *IF* you cannot do this, “then you are a very stupid man, my son!”

This, though, I am sure you are not. Indeed, you present-day young men, to whom your country will be for ever grateful, are

very much on top of the world. So if you care to, jump into my rickety old cab, and we will tell the Jehu to drive us to Piccadilly Circus, which has ever been the centre of the World, a magic circle from where we shall journey daily and nightly to places that you have only read of, there to see or meet many of the famous or notorious of whom you have probably only vaguely heard.

If you come for a ride with me you must come with an open mind, and not grouse because there are no such things as taxis. You must not, because you are of the Speed Kings, turn up your nose at the slower method into which we shall be obliged to fall. Do not scream for Niagara when you are in Boulter's Lock, or chafe for a Rolls Royce because I buy you a seat to sit beside Jim Selby on the Brighton Coach.

It is true that you may find yourself without a telephone, but for this be thankful!

Do not disdainfully wave away Pink Gin as an *apéritif*; it will give your constitution the rest that "White Ladies" invariably deny it.

Realize that though there will be no electric light to shine where angels never fear to tread, gas and kisses go very well together. And do not grumble if the evening papers are not upon your breakfast table or if you are unable to see a photograph of a prizefighter two minutes after he has decided in the first round that it is better to take the count than to become one.

Don't be disappointed if you see no brilliantly lit advertisements in the Circus which to-day is known as the Scotsman's Cinema, for you must understand that it was not until well into the present century that the great publicity campaign, which has made the day perfectly hideous, was launched.

The first and only really beautiful picture poster on the walls in the Nineties was one of a curly-headed boy blowing "Bubbles," which advertised soap invented by a Mr. Pears. The first and best of the comic posters to be seen on the hoardings was also an advertisement by the manufacturers of this same famous toilet requisite. It was a picture of a dirty, dilapidated-looking man, the caption beneath it being:

"Last Year I used Pears Soap, since then I have used no other."

A first-class jest, I think it will be agreed.

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It is true that you may find yourself without a telephone, but for this be thankful !

Do not disdainfully wave away Pink Gin as an *apéritif* ; it will give your constitution the rest that "White Ladies" invariably deny it.

Realize that though there will be no electric light to shine where angels never fear to tread, gas and kisses go very well together. And do not grumble if the evening papers are not upon your breakfast table or if you are unable to see a photograph of a prizefighter two minutes after he has decided in the first round that it is better to take the count than to become one.

Don't be disappointed if you see no brilliantly lit advertisements in the Circus which to-day is known as the Scotsman's Cinema, for you must understand that it was not until well into the present century that the great publicity campaign, which has made the day perfectly hideous, was launched.

The first and only really beautiful picture poster on the walls in the Nineties was one of a curly-headed boy blowing "Bubbles," which advertised soap invented by a Mr. Pears. The first and best of the comic posters to be seen on the hoardings was also an advertisement by the manufacturers of this same famous toilet requisite. It was a picture of a dirty, dilapidated-looking man, the caption beneath it being :

"Last Year I used Pears Soap, since then I have used no other."

A first-class jest, I think it will be agreed.

These were the days when rural England was really truly rural and not a place where, among the fruit and flowers, we were informed that Somebody's "Liver Pills were so bracing," or our attention was drawn to a placard over a dairy farm assuring us that "Beer is Best."

If you will accept the Nineties as they were, I promise that you shall never hear me administer that social anaesthetic beloved of Colonel Blimp, "Ah! in my day." Neither shall I endeavour to explain to you that Speed, the God of Youth, has done more to slaughter all the beautiful things in life than does the present-day vulgarian, who eats, drinks and sleeps in his passbook.

Believe me, you will not find me deploring the existence of the over-night-made film star or a thousand other appalling pieces of nonsense. So come along, you shall be a modern Tom and I will be an ancient Jerry. Tom on all occasions shall get Jerry to explain London as he knew it, and then, every question having been answered and the truth told, the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, perhaps at some later date Jerry may ask Tom to explain the many, to him, outrageous happenings which are part of the Nineteen Forties—and if he can achieve the impossible, Jerry will be extremely grateful. However, we have a long jaunt before us and that time is not yet.

The first thing to get into your head if London is to be visualized in the Nineties is to understand how remote the near-by suburbs of to-day were from the heart of the Metropolis. Hammer-smith, for instance, served only by an asphyxiating Underground Railway and the two-horse bus, was practically the country. Hampstead and all the surrounding districts of a like kind which are now accessible in less than half an hour by taxi, tram, tube and train, were places which, if one had to visit them, were something of a journey, the trip from point to point being only possible by taking a two-wheeled hansom, a four-wheeler, or a by no means frequent bus, all of which crawled their weary way tired and tortoiselike.

To call a hansom it was necessary to blow a whistle sharply *once*, to attract the attention of a four-wheeler *twice*, and for this reason nearly everybody carried silver whistles on their watch-chains. The charge for hiring these vehicles was a shilling a mile within the radius, plus a tip which, if not given, subjected the "fare" to extremely abusive personal remarks from the cabby,

who never failed to add all that was best of the Queen's English as spoken at Billingsgate, Wapping and other riverside resorts.

As there were no clocks on the cabs, it was, of course, impossible to estimate distances accurately, and one of the chief causes of heated argument was the length of any journey of more than a mile.

It was obviously not to be expected that a cabman would err on the short side, and if he became aware that he was driving a gentleman who didn't know London well, he would often proceed to his destination by the most circuitous route. Indeed, not infrequently if a country cousin hailed a cab at Charing Cross and asked to be taken to the Strand he would be driven to Regent Street, down St. James's Street, and then along Pall Mall to the place from which he had started.

The hansom cab had many drawbacks, not the least of them being the trap-door in its roof, for though through it orders were given, it was this hole which enabled the driver to have a highly amusing time listening to the amorous advances eager young gentlemen made to the charmers whose entertainment they were seeking.

The majority of the horses harnessed to these two-wheeled dangerously balanced contraptions were hardly animals for which one would have borrowed money to make them one's own. Many of these quadrupeds had gone well over at the knees and were ever ready and willing to fall on cobblestones or rutty roads, a proceeding that invariably flung the occupant through the glass window which, if let down in two parts by the driver, held the lady or gentleman secure from heaven's fresh air. If this protection from the wind and rain was "up" and your thoroughbred decided to give an imitation of a Grand National outsider at Beecher's Brook, you more often than not found yourself lying prone on his hind-quarters as he plunged and struggled on the Queen's highway.

Another danger connected with the hansom was that sometimes the horse, having taken a dislike to you as you climbed into the conveyance he was fed to draw, set his ears back and kicked the dashboard in front of you to splinters.

This board, it must be explained, was little more than three feet from your lap and only one from his legs. Again, at times, if the animal was circus-trained, he could manage to get his hoofs

right over the dashboard itself, which proceeding enabled you, if you were not of a timid disposition, to count the number of nails in his shoes. If you were lucky enough to escape either of the foregoing possibilities, a large number of these restive animals, being of a highly sensitive temperament, bolted, for no other reason than to show what they could do in the way of smashing up the cab.

However, it is only fair to say that when solid rubber tyres were first invented and took the place of the then existing iron rims, there was no smarter "turnout" to be seen in Town than a brightly painted hansom with its silver-plated wire wheels and a high-stepping chestnut in the shafts.

The driver always looked a picture perched high upon his back seat. His broad seamed boxcloth coat was usually adorned with large pearlies, and he generally wore the first, or artificial last, rose of summer in his buttonhole, and a squat top-hat, tilted jauntily, which shone like the finest black lacquer through having been treated with a preparation of which Guinness's stout was the chief ingredient. All this completed a decidedly gay and sporting make-up.

The four-wheelers, or "growlers" as they were called, owing, it must be supposed, to their drivers being usually the last word in bad manners, were the poor relations of the hansom. They were invariably driven by extremely old men who endeavoured to look, if possible, as ancient as their horses. It may be mentioned here that with few exceptions these hackney carriages would with their ancient fish-like smell have won prizes in any company, the domestic dustbin as a competitor not being excepted.

Besides these two doubtful joys the only other means of conveyance placed at the disposal of the public in 1889 and for a long time afterwards were the "knife-board" and "garden-seated" buses. They were labelled by a wag who looked at the hanging lamps which shone in their interiors as "conveyances lit by acetylene lamps and drawn by a set-o'-lean horses." That the feet of the travellers who patronized them might be kept warm, their floors were strewn with straw, sometimes dry and clean, and sometimes wet and not.

The word "knife-board" was used to describe the more uncomfortable kind of these archaic affairs because the seat on their roof was a long bench which ran parallel with the sides and on

which the passengers sat back to back. The "garden-seated" bus variety differed from the cutlery kind in that the seats upstairs designed for two were placed one behind the other and divided by an aisle down the centre.

To "sit on top" in fine weather next the driver was the aim and object of everyone who paid his pence. These knights of the road were as a rule genial men of round and rubicund countenance. They were nearly all blessed with a grand sense of humour and were master of good Cockney repartee and cheery insult, which they were ever ready to hurl at those who irritated them.

The classic retort courteous from one of these merry fellows to a brother whip on a rival bus during a heated altercation was: "Oh! my behind to you."

To which his friend replied: "What! that under your hat?"

What these poor gentlemen had to put up with, listening to their passengers pointing out the landmarks of London and usually describing them quite inaccurately, must have been devastating.

On one occasion it appears that a by no means well-informed young man journeying from Hammersmith to St. Paul's with his fiancée, who was visiting London for the first time, hesitated when the girl, looking at the statue of Queen Anne opposite the sacred edifice designed by the immortal Wren, asked him who the lady was. The bus driver, noticing that his passenger was absolutely stumped, endeavoured to help him out by saying, "Oh! go on, Guv'nor, don't give up at the last moment. Say it's Marie Lloyd."

For the benefit of those who never had the privilege of seeing this comic genius, let it be recorded that Miss Lloyd was the most daring and brilliant music hall artist of her day.

I have purposely written at some length of the transport available years ago, as it was the basic cause of the comparatively leisurely existence enjoyed in the late Eighties and early Nineties, seeing that short distances taking an inordinately long time made violent hurry impossible.

It must not be imagined, however, that London—and especially Piccadilly Circus—was without excitement because excessive speed was not the order of the day. Indeed, as there was no rule of the road to be observed, no policeman to control the traffic, and every horse-drawn vehicle pulled up or driven wherever its owner chose,

there was generally plenty of noise and bustle owing to frequent collisions and the shouts which were heard on all sides as horses that had fallen down refused to get up when either coaxed, beaten or cursed. Pedestrians added to the confusion as they dodged about from right, left, and centre.

It was because of this happy-go-lucky chaos that a famous soldier on whose breast a great Queen had pinned a much-coveted decoration observed that the bravest thing he had ever done was to cross Piccadilly Circus!

A really exhilarating sight was when Lord Londesborough's four-in-hand, driven by His Lordship himself, dashed through the Circus on its way to the Mall. One of the most popular sporting noblemen of the period, he affected no "Coachy" or "Horsey" appearance, and was content to handle the ribbons without attempting to cut a dash of any kind. The livery of his grooms, however, added a welcome splash of colour to the varied scene, and the sound of the coach horn which heralded the approach of his leaders added music to the rattling of burnished chains and the clatter of iron shoes which struck sparks from flint and paving-stones. It was no mean achievement to steer high-spirited animals through a veritable maze of vehicles, but this His Lordship did with the greatest possible ease.

It was during the early Eighties that the first safety matches manufactured by Messrs. Bryant & May were introduced to London. They were a real safeguard and minimized the risk of fire, for they struck only on the box.

One of the members of the famous firm was a great coaching enthusiast and was constantly to be seen driving his well-matched team in Hyde Park. He always looked extremely smart, and his appearance gave birth to one of Sir Francis Burnand's, then Editor of *Punch*, most witty sallies:

"Oh!" said he, as he watched the coach approaching, "here comes Mr. Bryant. My word! doesn't he look *striking on the box!*"

A memory of yesterday was the Piccadilly goat, a large white specimen of its kind which used to wander unattended amidst the West End traffic. Daily it trotted on its way hither and thither without fear, up and down Lower Regent Street and in the Circus itself. It belonged to the Rothschild family and had its quarters in a stable off Stratton Street. Decidedly a part of London life, it was quite a friendly creature, but it resented being petted and

did not hesitate to butt those who attempted to take such a liberty, its antics causing much fun and amusement.

A well-known figure, too, in the West End was a wretched, draggle-tailed, crazy woman by the name of Jane Cakebread; her only claim to immortality was the fact that she was sentenced for drunkenness and uproarious behaviour no less than a hundred and twenty times.

A harmless lunatic who prowled about for years amidst the crowds in the Circus was a tall, lank individual dressed as a clergyman, who occupied his time by stepping up quietly behind any pedestrian who caught his eye and hissing into his or her ear a question unanswerable for the majority. It was, "Are you saved?" This West End pest, for so he certainly became, was dealt with by the police, and not before it was high time, for his sudden appearances, apparently from nowhere, became by no means mirth-provoking. It was bad enough when dusk was falling for elderly spinsters to be suddenly asked if they had repented of the sins they probably regretted they had not committed, but when this weird and somewhat terrifying person decided that his biblical activities might prove more effective in clubland at midnight it was decided that his excursions must be put a stop to. Almost his last escapade was waiting for and waylaying in the early hours of the morning no less a person than Sir Henry Irving, who lived at that time in the upper part of a house on the corner of Grafton Street. The great tragedian had dismissed his cab at the end of Bond Street and was sauntering along quietly, lost in thought, when suddenly our friend sprang from the shadow of a doorway and, barring the way, shouted in a sepulchral voice, "Stop! Have you found the Lord?" Irving, who was a master of repartee, nothing taken aback, replied most graciously, "No, sir, but if you have lost him I shall be most delighted to join you in the hunt."

As a wit Henry Irving wasted no words, and as the teller of a comic story he had few equals. Curiously aloof, except in the society of his very few intimates—and this only after the play, during supper at the Garrick Club—he was seldom trapped into discussions on ordinary subjects. His ruling passion was the theatre, and except to Ellen Terry and John Lawrence Toole it is to be doubted if he ever opened his heart or showed his real feelings to anyone else in the world. Fantastically generous where money was concerned, he was strangely stinting of praise; and this was

an odd trait in his character, for beneath a disciplined reserve he had a great and sympathetic soul and was touched on the instant by any story of a comrade in distress, whom he immediately sought to help, even though the man or woman was unknown to him. To have thanked him would have embarrassed him beyond words, and the many who received timely assistance at his hands were generally quite unaware from whence it came.

In company his colossal personality overshadowed all but the greatest figures of his day, and it was truly said that had he chosen any other profession than the stage he could not have failed to reach the heights. With a smile that the most attractive woman might well have envied, his wonderful face in repose was awe-inspiring; and his criticisms of those he thought little of or who had earned his displeasure were so short, sharp and devastating that as a rule silence followed the laugh they had created. As an example, when he was asked what he thought of Richard Mansfield, the American star who was appearing in a Shakespearean production, his comment was, "Umph! Yes, his skin acts well." When he heard that Nansen, the Arctic explorer, who was receiving, as he thought, too much publicity, intended coming to see him act, he said, "Oh! is he? Yes, Nansen? Oh yes, he's the gentleman who stands the cold so well." When a horse was needed for one of his productions, a dealer brought a white one down to the Lyceum, and on being asked if it was quiet and reliable the man said, "Oh yes, Sir Henry, he's a good actor and carried Mr. Beerbohm Tree all last season." At that moment the horse opened its mouth and looked as if he was yawning. "Oh!" said Irving; "a bit of a critic, I see."

Richard Mansfield was a really splendid actor; apart from many memorable performances, his Richard the Third was the best I have ever seen. Looking back to the late Eighties in America, one remembers his then secretary, a slight, keen and very alert young man. His name was Charles B. Cochran. If someone had prophesied that he would become a great figure in the theatre I wonder if we boys would have thought it possible, but this, as a showman, he turned out to be, and even more than that, for he is unrivalled in his judgment of quality in an artist, his flair for beautiful stage effects and all that is loveliest in a lovely art.

A host of players and others are greatly beholden to him, for he has always ridden out into the open, challenging and unafraid.

I echo, with affection, the last line of his new book, which is, "Here's to the future!"

In the Nineties the buildings round the Circus itself were much the same as they are to-day. The Criterion and the Pavilion faced each other in friendly rivalry, and the varied elevations, with the exception of those to the west, which were pulled down to make way for the palatial premises of Messrs. Swan & Edgar, and those to the east where the then newly rebuilt but now old Scott's Restaurant stands, are little changed.

It is by no means uninteresting to note that a Mr. Spiers and a Mr. Pond erected the Criterion Theatre on the site of a place of entertainment known as the Piccadilly Dancing Saloon. They built this playhouse not for the purpose of making a profit out of it as such, but as a place they hoped would attract a large public to see the pieces produced there, a crowd of hungry people many of whom would be sure to dine at their adjoining restaurant of the same name and return for supper when the curtain fell. Their judgment was very sound, as the East Room of the Criterion and the Grill Room became two of the most fashionable places of their kind in Town. Another feature of this establishment was its famous Long Bar, which for many years was the rendezvous of a number of the most unsavoury characters, known to the police as the "Criterion Boys." They were varied species of birds of prey, being confidence men, card-sharpers, bogus racing tipsters, money-lenders' touts, and polite blackmailers, who lived by "telling the tale" to gullible pigeons who fluttered in to be well plucked, quite unconscious that the plausible gentlemen who got into conversation with them were extremely dangerous people. This bar, which might well have been called The Tricksters' Club, has long since been closed, and in having drawn attention to the fact that it ever existed it must not be thought that its very respectable proprietors had the faintest idea of the class of patrons who frequented it.

As has been said, the Criterion Theatre was really built to attract gastronomic custom; and to show what little value as a theatrical asset its owners placed on a building which became one of the most celebrated comedy theatres in the world, they were content to let it on lease of almost indefinite length to a Mr. William Duck, at the ridiculously small rental of £50 a week.

From this gentleman it passed into the hands of Mr. Charles Wyndham, and to-day it is managed by the heirs of that superlative actor. If either Mr. Spiers or Mr. Pond ever fancied themselves as ballroom dancers and news should reach them in the Great Beyond of the real value of their playhouse, one might well imagine that they would dance a nervous breakdown for all Eternity.

"Duck" would seem a most appropriate name for a man whose landlords sold food, a person whom any caterer would find it by no means difficult to cut up. But not so this tenant, who was a very shrewd, though ill-educated, theatre personality. Many were the stories told of his unbelievable artistic ignorance and of the way he persistently ignored the letter "h." One day at Plymouth H. J. Byron, the writer of many brilliant plays and burlesques, met Mr. Duck on the Hoe and enquired where he had been all the morning. Duck replied, "I've been having a walk round the 'O'." "Really?" replied Byron. "Don't you think that to-morrow you ought to take a turn round the 'H'?"

It is recorded that when one of Duck's stage managers told him that a young lady who had been engaged to act at the Criterion Theatre was "a perfect *ingénue*," he said, "Well, if that's the way she behaves you'd better call a rehearsal and tell her about it." From this I think it goes to show that the men who dabbled in play-producing when our grandmothers were alive possessed that cultured academic outlook so necessary and often to be found among the present-day purely speculative gentlemen, who hope that the geese they finance will turn out swans or possibly, if they are lucky, birds of another sort. Quite recently one of these stalwarts, whose knowledge of the French language was on a par with Mr. Duck's knowledge of English, gave as his reason for granting a week's holiday to an actress in his employ, that, having heard she was shortly to be married, he felt it only fair she should be given time to get her "*torso*" ready.

It is a curious fact that two restaurant-keepers should have been directly responsible for the Test Matches between England and Australia, but this is the case. As young men Mr. Spiers and Mr. Pond, who had left the Mother Country to seek their fortunes, met beneath the blue skies of sunny South Australia and, joining forces, opened a restaurant next to the most popular theatre in Melbourne. Their venture proved an enormous success, and when

later the first gold rush came they decided to go up-country to the mining districts and run an hotel at Ballarat, where again they made money hand-over-fist. It was during these days of over-night mining fortunes that they conceived the idea of bringing a team of English cricketers to play the best Eleven Australia could put in the field. This they did. The novelty proved a huge attraction, and it was owing to their venturing into the realms of sport that the Lion and the Kangaroo have fought for "the Ashes" ever since.

In the middle Eighties the Circus was by no means the shopping centre that it is to-day, while Shaftesbury Avenue, entirely barren of theatres, was a dowdy thoroughfare, not having emerged from the humble business swaddling-clothes which it only cast aside in the Nineties to dress itself in the expensive costumes now to be seen in its chromium-plated windows.

Where Eros, the work of Alfred Gilbert, perhaps the greatest sculptor save Rodin, now looks down from on high and listens to the same stories of joy and sorrow that he has heard for nearly half a century, there stood a coffee-stall on wheels surrounded by flower-sellers who, being expert designers of "buttonholes," endeavoured to attract the attention of every male escorting one of the opposite sex by crying out, "*Buy a flower for the pretty lady,*" a remark which, while making its object wonder if her looking-glass had lied, flattered the gentleman's vanity even though he was well aware that his Juliet had a face like Epstein's Adam. Boys with brooms brushed the paths at all the crossings, lively little urchins, who were the living image of George Baxter's famous print, "*Copper, yer 'onour,*" which is a picture full of charm and happy ragged Cockney fearlessness.

On every hand bootblacks shouted, "*Shine, sir, only a penny, shine, sir.*" These boys, dressed in red jackets and black patent-leather peaked caps, did a roaring trade as they knelt at their boxes, spitting on their brushes when they weren't whistling gaily at their work.

That so many lads were expert salesmen of Day & Martin's blacking goes to show that the places in which the ordinary man dwelt, lodging-houses or small hotels in districts adjacent to the Circus, possessed no servants who were particularly anxious to deal with the footwear of the clients who patronized these establishments.

A thing that did not strike one at the time, though it certainly makes one shudder to remember it now, is the fact that the long skirts of beautifully gowned women swept the pavements. It is true that a number of charming ladies had silken cords hanging from their waists on which were clips to catch up their dresses, but it was the exception rather than the rule not to see the rank and fashion "doing vestry."

These were the times when "bustles" served to set off the much admired flounces of the day. It is giving away no secret to inform the unsophisticated that beneath the outer garments worn by these attractive people were thick calico or linen drawers, of a divided design, strange affairs that had boldly ousted the pantalette which previously had blushed unseen beneath the crinoline worn by the milk-and-water maidens who specialized in "the vapours" if a Dundreary whisker brushed their virgin cheeks. These linen-buttoned affairs, although unsightly, were extremely warm and held in safe keeping chemises of the most alarming thickness which sought sanctuary beneath the tightly laced whalebone stays that were the means of producing the wasp-like 18-inch waists so attractive to the dashing lover of the period.

I am also informed by those who ought to know that "Jaeger combinations," which were considered to be the last word in hidden feminine attire, did not make their appearance till later; but this I cannot vouch for, as in the Victorian era I was only quite a young man.

I am also given to understand that the pneumonia-producing silken undies of to-day have dealt these supposedly hygienic garments a deadly blow, but as I do not profess to be very knowledgeable in these matters I can only hope that the armour-like protection which, years gone by, seems to have been so dear to the hearts of maid and matron, has long since ceased to exist.

When thinking of women, a thing which I hope no man who is a man will ever cease to do, one remembers that make-up was unknown in these less sophisticated days, and to see a lady who *was* a lady with even a little powder on her face was very rare indeed, while the world's copyright of rouge and eyeblack was the exclusive property of members who belonged to the oldest profession in the world. However, as these "Fanny Frails" re-

mained at home during the daytime and were only to be met with at certain restaurants, bars, and the lounges of music halls at night, the West End was singularly free from paint and patchouli. If in the Nineties any young society female had used cosmetics and assisted nature with a lipstick and an eyebrow pencil, she would not only have run the risk of being taken for a demi-mondaine, but would have been labelled on sight as an amateur of "a certain class" and would have been cut by her women friends and winked at by their fiancés. It was for this reason that proprietors of beauty parlours in the Victorian era were conspicuous by their absence.

In 1890 a lady who loved not well but too widely was called a "tart," while the word "fast" was used to describe a damsel who, though well-born, was not disinclined, if opportunity served, to behave in, shall we say, a slightly unorthodox manner.

Apropos of ladies of birth and breeding who had qualified for and joined Mrs. Warren's profession—these descendants of mediaeval gangsters who had been made Barons and were presented with many a square mile of the fair lands of Britain for having "bumped off" an inconvenient rival of some ridiculous-looking king, queen, prince or prelate—a wag wrote a wickedly cynical little six-line verse; but because it is extremely witty, and therefore obviously not of the drawing-room, let me rescue it from oblivion's waste-paper basket and offer it to a confused world which is sadly in need of a smile. Here it is:

When Lady Jane became a Tart,
It almost broke her father's heart.
But blood is blood and race is race,
And so, to mitigate disgrace,
He bought a most expensive beat
From Asprey's up to Oxford Street.

What a delightful touch is the word *almost*—a devastating indictment—suggesting as it does a parental "winking" for the sake of an ancestral home the walls of which cried loudly for repair, and a picture-gallery weeping because day by day it was being gradually emptied.

In harking back to "the bright young things" who lightened the daytime and night life of our now, we hope, sedate grand-

papas, we must not forget them when as "boy friends" they dashed about the Town.

The young men of the late Seventies who took life as easily as the Borgias, though obviously in quite another way, were known as "la-di-das"; in the Eighties as "mashers"; and in the Nineties as "Johnnies." A song describing the latter was written by George Grossmith, a successful entertainer and comedian who was the original of many principal parts in the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas at the Savoy Theatre. It was called "I'm the Johnnie who trots 'em round," and was exceedingly popular.

Another ditty written in praise of a well-known coaching celebrity, a man about Town who was the very spirit of really virile London, Carlton Blyth by name, who drove his own four-in-hand, paints a fairly good picture of all a real "Johnnie" stood for with his happy outlook on life. The words of the chorus of this song, which had a remarkably good tune, were :

Get out of the way, get out of the way,
Clear, Clear, Clear,
The noisy Johnnie's here
You have no need to fear.
Hullo there, Hullo there, you need not look severe,
For what's bad form in other men
Is very good form in me, in me,
Is very good form in me.

It is amusing to remember that this very popular Mr. Carlton Blyth often made a practice of having a whole line of hansom cabs waiting outside his rooms—I think in Jermyn Street—for no other reason than that it gave him enormous pleasure to have an entire cab rank at his door for the use of his many friends.

The chief occupation of the ordinary "Johnnies" seemed to be the frequenting of stage doors, where they waited patiently—not singly but in battalions—to escort their particular favourites in the chorus to a somewhat doubtful supper club. Of brains they had few, of professions as a rule none. Bond Street was their playground in the late morning, and the Park their favourite place in which to loll during the afternoon. Midnight, however, was really their midday, and if they did nothing else to add to the gaiety of the nation they were certainly always immaculately dressed and were known amongst other things as lineal descendants of "the Crutch-and-Toothpick Brigade," who were first cousins

to the departed "mashers," whose slogan was "old wine and young women."

Over their swallow-tail evening-dress clothes the "Johnnies" donned Inverness capes lined with satin; they carried gold-mounted malacca canes, wore patent-leather shoes called "pumps," and had as a head-covering silken collapsible top-hats invented by one Gibus, which, when not in use, were shut up and placed under the left arm. However, notwithstanding their fobs and their foibles, their diamond studs and their gardenias, not one of them was of the poisonous present-day effeminate variety, and many a burly ruffian found himself spreadeagled by an apparently lackadaisical exquisite in white kid gloves to whom he had passed some offensive remark.

While the "masher" usually remained one till the age of five-and-twenty, the "Johnnie"—who was rather proud of being talked of and written about as "a silly ass"—was more of the high-spirited watch-me-I'm-always-out-for-a-devil-of-a-time kind of young gentleman, and was content to shed his nickname a trifle earlier. He drank the best champagne he was allowed to owe for, attributed his many financial crises to "fast women and slow horses," and pretended that to him the world was an open book. However, these "lads of the village," as they delighted in being called, were really a pretty good lot. If any proof were wanted that their hearts were in the right place, it must not be forgotten that they were the forebears of the "nuts" who in the first Great War gave their lives ungrudgingly for their country, going into battle with a laugh and dying with a smile upon their lips. It was one of these "nuts," all of whom will for ever be held in affectionate remembrance, who, having been desperately wounded, was being carried by the stretcher-bearers to a brewery behind the lines which had been converted into a first-aid station, when he enquired what had laid him low. The answer was "A shell, sir."

"Oh! and where are you taking me to?"

"Over there to the brewery, sir," came the reply.

"Are you really? How strange!" whispered this gallant young "nut." "I remember once seeing a play at home called 'Sweet Nell of Old Drury.' If I live, I think I shall write one and call it 'Sweet Shell of Old Brewery.'" And having delivered himself of this perfect jest he fell back unconscious, to awake a fortnight later in his beloved London.

The clothes worn by men in the late Eighties had distinctly changed for the better in the Nineties. Coats were cut to fit less loosely, and no longer did bulky double-breasted vests have large pockets for the purpose of harbouring turnip-like silver watches attached to cable chains.

The light trousers of the beaux of 1885 vanished some ten years later when leg coverings, pleated at the waist and of a modified pantaloon cut, were considered "the last word."

As muffs which hung from ladies' necks by jewelled chains were thought to be absolutely essential by the charmers of the Nineties, so no gentleman was ever seen without a walking-stick of some kind. The now almost extinct top-hat was worn by all and sundry, the only other form of headwear being the high-crown bowler, with a curling brim to which was sometimes fixed a "guard," this being a cord the end of which was slipped through the top buttonhole of the coat so that no wicked wind could steal it from its owner.

Flannel shirts were by no means rare and were worn by many, though they were disguised at the neck by linen "dickies" and at the wrists by well-starched cuffs usually held together by ornaments known as "solitaires."

Gloves, too, were as much part and parcel of a man's make-up as the hair on his head, and were always removed when shaking hands. They were generally of a deep tan-coloured kid and had three black ribs upon their backs.

Patent boots, either with cloth button-up tops or ones that laced, entirely of patent leather, were the only sort of footwear worn by the West End exquisites. However, no gentleman's gentleman would have thought of allowing his master to venture abroad with patent leather looking new. The moment a pair came home from the makers they were at once De Guiched, De Guiche being a sticky black varnish applied with a sponge; why, I don't know, but it was the hall-mark of the perfect person who possessed a perfect valet, a perfect flat, a perfect mistress and a perfect knowledge of the world, in fact an individual who with consummate ease could handle those unnerving situations that almost always arise at some time in every man's life when a perfect gentleman is found to be neither perfect nor a gentleman. The gala frock-coat was cut no lower than the knee; indeed, it was about as high as the modest maidenly skirt of to-day. With this

nothing was considered smarter than shepherd's plaid trousers, black and white checks known as "sponge bags."

To-day the only gold to be seen is that which the dentist hammers into our I.O.U. teeth, for even the hard-working rich have to bank in their upper jaws, but in the Nineties the jingle of a few sovereigns in the pocket gave people a sense of financial security which the crumpling of bits of paper can never convey.

No watch-chain of the period was complete without its sovereign purse, a little round gadget generally constructed to accommodate five golden coins of the realm which, in the slang of Victoria's day, were known as "thickuns." The cart-wheel or five-shilling piece was always referred to as a "dollar," the shilling—as it is to-day—"a bob," and the humble sixpence as "a tizzy." A penny was known as "a brown."

With regard to the London season, one may mention that it ended with the Goodwood Race Meeting in July and did not get into full swing again until towards the last week of September. This interval, known as the "Silly Season," saw London very empty and many of the theatres either closed or the plays that were running in them performed by understudies in the principal parts.

For men to wear a flower to-day is the exception rather than the rule, but in the Nineties a real man about Town would have as soon thought of going out minus a "buttonhole" in his coat as he would have of strolling up Piccadilly without his tie; indeed, most of the West End florists had standing orders that these floral adornments were to be delivered each morning to their customers during the entire season.

Gardenias, parma violets or tuberose were the most fashionable flowers worn by the clubmen of all ages. Ordinary business men seldom went to their offices without a blossom of some sort; these, for economical reasons, were placed in a tumbler on arrival in the City so that they would be fresh for their journey home and also, it was hoped, for the following morning. A patent glass holder filled with water for buttonholes was very popular with the middle classes. This was fixed at the back of the right lapel and was the means of enabling the wearer to look gay all day. The moss rose, price twopence, was a great favourite with suburban horticulturists condemned to a humdrum life in dingy offices.

Briefly, this is a sketchy picture of the ordinary male. That the march of time has stamped it as being slightly grotesque is only natural, and all that was considered to be extraordinarily smart possibly gives cause for good-humoured merriment; but beware, oh beware, you present-day Mr. and Mrs. Brummells, of laughing at the coats and trousers of your grandfathers—or the hats and feathers worn by your grandmothers—for remember that without doubt you will be thought ridiculous-looking by those who in years to come turn the fading pages of family albums.

In having drawn attention to the custom of floral adornments I am reminded that, summer or winter, the great Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was never seen without an orchid in his buttonhole. One cannot remember any more popular figure than "our Joe" as he was affectionately called by his followers, and even by those who differed from him politically.

His keen alert face with its shrewd eyes, in one of which he wore a monocle the better to size up his fellows and the world in general, added much to his always immaculate and jaunty appearance. He delighted in long cigars as much as he hated walking. The only occasion that I had the honour of meeting this great national figure was in Portland Place at the house of Sir Alfred Fripp, as brilliant a surgeon as he was a charitable man and staunch friend.

The statesman on leaving hailed a passing cab and directed the driver to go to Mr. Brodrick's, the then Minister of War.

"But, sir," I ventured to suggest, "he lives only just across the road."

"I know he does," replied Mr. Chamberlain, smiling, "but I dislike walking a yard if I can possibly avoid it."

While the debility and gentry were thus attired, the beggars of the Metropolis were ragged and the children of the poor went barefooted. Servants, except those in livery, never attempted to be mistaken for their masters, and the butcher, the baker and the candlestick-maker were easily to be recognized, as they all wore the clothes which the public associated with their various trades.

In the Nineties, there being no law against street noises, German Bands blared with a solemn gaiety all their own in every London street and square. The middle-aged, comfortable-looking men of

which these orchestras were composed were usually arrayed in shabby uniforms, though their huge brass instruments, shining as they did in the sun—if by accident the sun shone—considerably brightened what otherwise would have been a drab picture, though it cannot be said that it gave them anything but a military appearance of the third class. Most of them were probably ancestors of those who till lately served under the baton of genius at Covent Garden, but they were, I may mention, no Bedouin-like performers who hurriedly struck their tents. On the contrary, these dozen or more peaceful-looking pavement professors whose unborn grandsons were destined to march against Britain in “field grey,” when once they decided on a pitch stayed “put” behind their bandstands and remained there until their entire programme of many waltzes had succeeded in making cats mew, dogs howl and the local landladies take to drink.

The forebears of that clown dog of the 1939 World War, Mr. Mussolini, not at this time being bedfellows of the olive-branch-bearing Hitler, were their only rivals. These “maka-demusica” ruffians, with their green-baize-covered organs that hung by leather straps from their necks and were supported by a wooden stick from underneath set firmly on the ground, did dreadful work with their hurdy-gurdies. They practically all resided at Saffron Hill and were never without little monkeys, usually dressed as soldiers in crimson jackets with shakos held on their heads by elastic bands beneath their chins. These one and all carried pop-guns with which they had been trained to drill, and their antics left no doubt that they were nearly as intelligent, if not so cunning, as the swarthy Neapolitans who had taught them to put out their hands for money—which they themselves knew how to do so much better than all the other cadgers in the world put together.

Of English music in the streets there was plenty to be heard, dispensed in large doses from huge piano organs, many of which had glass panels let into the upper part of the woodwork through which might be seen three or four pairs of dreary-looking wax figures which waltzed with mechanical dignity to the strains of “The British Grenadiers” or the latest popular ballad.

It was no uncommon thing to see a dozen children working for these organ-grinders, troops of little ragamuffins who, dancing extremely well, encouraged the passers-by to part with their pennies.

As has been mentioned, there being no noise ban in the Nineties, it was quite conceivable that any lady rejoicing in the name of Maud might be summoned from her bed in the middle of the night by a solo cornet-player bidding her come into the garden, for "Come into the Garden, Maud" was a song which for years was all the rage, having been made popular by England's then most celebrated tenor Sims Reeves.

At night-time London in the late Eighties was ill-lit, electric light being practically unknown, and the gas flickering in the street lamps cast many a deep shadow. These were manipulated each evening by men with long poles at the top of which were burners in metal containers. Being pushed up through the bottom of the lamps, they performed a double service, for they turned on the gas and lit it at the same time. In the early mornings the lamplighters went their rounds again, this time pushing their unlighted poles against the jets, thereby extinguishing the flame above their heads.

About the year 1884 a novelty was sprung upon the Town. This was known as "Roger's Electric Light" and, being looked upon more as a joke than anything else, it became as good a stock gag for comedians during the pantomime season as those sacred to the memory of the lodger and the mother-in-law. It turned out, however, to be the vanguard of the modern street lighting.

To the present generation life would seem almost impossible without the telephone, and yet it was not till the Nineties that it found its way into private houses, and then only for use in limited areas, long-distance calls being unthought of.

To receive a telegram in these days was an event, and to send one a thing to be carefully considered. A ring and double knock at the front door, which meant that a telegraph boy was waiting outside, threw every household into a flutter, for these messages in brown envelopes never bore ordinary tidings, and were considered such a luxury that the recipient became an extremely important person in the eyes of his friends or his family.

It was at this period that many old customs fell into disuse, and among them the undertakers' business, from a spectacular point of view, became a dying industry in every sense of the word. But although the waving of plumes on the heads of Flemish geldings, so grotesque-looking that no corpse with a sense of humour could have helped laughing if it had been able to see them, had

almost vanished with Cruikshank's pencil, the funeral pantomimes of the presumed civilized were still produced with the main object of frightening the timid and loosing a Niagara of tears, even from the eyes of those who had not been remembered in the Will. The mute with his waist-long crêpe hat-band, which no doubt helped to give an air of freshness to his ill-fitting and often slightly beer-stained frock-coat, had gone, but there still remained the professional mourner, who could look unutterably lugubrious for five shillings and sob loudly for seven and sixpence.

Silence and surely night-time were created for the last journey of those who seek their long and peaceful sleep. When, oh when, will manufactured agonies be buried with the barbarians who invented them? We are taught—and we believe—that those who have left us are happier by far than they ever were in this world of anxiety and confusion, and that our reunion with those who have meant more to us than life itself will be a greater joy than we have ever known before. Why then all this dismal hullabaloo? Let us rather rejoice that the little time we have to wait is but a second of the eternity of happiness to come.

However, this is not the place to pursue so serious a subject, and the writer concludes by saying that although he does not particularly wish that "Tommy, make room for your Uncle" should be sung at his passing, he devoutly hopes that the time is not far distant when someone will arise to scotch for ever the platitudinous preacher and infuse, if not uproarious merriment, at least hope and happiness into temporary partings.

People in 1890 had good cause to be grateful to George Baxter, the inventor of a coloured process which enabled humble folk for the first time to place reproductions of famous masterpieces in their homes. Nearly all of these pictures were delightfully executed, and many were really beautiful. Small copies were usually sold in packets for a shilling or two, while the larger and more expensive of these prints cost two and sixpence or five shillings. To-day these selfsame pictures, owing to the secret of Baxter's process having died with him, are only to be obtained from dealers, the small ones fetching anything from ten shillings or a pound sterling upwards, while others are listed at ten, twenty, even fifty guineas.

Many books have been written on Baxter and his art, but even

the most knowledgeable collector of these treasures should be extremely careful, as a small ring of experts have created strange values and made the almost imperceptible marks on the prints themselves and the various designs of their mountings increase prices for the buyer which as a seller he will never obtain from those who have made Baxter a commercial as well as artistic life-study.

I was informed by a dealer that a complete and absolutely perfect collection of Baxter's work in the finest condition once changed hands for £10,000.

Baxter's son-in-law, Le Blond, endeavoured to retain the high standard his wife's father had set, but his work is easily distinguishable, for it possesses neither the richness of colour nor the exquisite finish of the master's hand.

Before the present Flats de Luxe were in existence, and indeed in the days when ordinary flats were something of a novelty, a great change in house decoration and furnishing became apparent. These years will always be remembered as peak years—not only for the dealers in antiques but also for the collectors who became eager to possess period pieces and the thousand and one charming works of art or interest fashioned by master craftsmen and treasured by their forebears.

Victorian furniture, which for so long had remained in undisputed possession of the lincrusta-walled dining-rooms and dado-adorned drawing-rooms of the ordinary householder, was either presented to poor relations or despatched to auction rooms where it changed hands for a song—probably one of sixpence—or at any rate was sold at prices of little consequence.

England suddenly awakened to the fact that the early anti-macassar renaissance, sacred to the memory of moths and maiden aunts, had outstayed its welcome, and began to cast loving glances on the slender beauty of Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton, and to appreciate, among other things, the cabinets and bureaux of a queen who rejoiced in the name of Anne, a lady who, had it not been for the carvers and wood-turners of her reign, would probably be forgotten with a dozen other extinguished monarchs who have been summoned to rule Britain by Divine Fright.

The ceilings of Angelica Kauffmann, and the chaste mantel-

pieces and mouldings of the Brothers Adam were crying aloud for the exquisite; lustre was replaced by Waterford, mahogany by rosewood, and horsehair and worsted work by silks and satins. As if by magic, there disappeared from the halls and staircases the portraits in oil of pompous nobodies who ought to have been boiled in it, and with them vanished the everlasting Landseers which immortalized more twelve-pointers than any forest could possibly have held. The static Black Brunswicker whose good-bye must surely have been the longest on record was promoted to the upper storeys, together with Frith's Railway Station, the principal figure in which was the local Horatio Bottomley being told that he was "wanted" (though it is difficult to imagine why gentlemen of his kind are wanted anywhere), and the impossible engraving of Waterloo in which Wellington is shown making the mistake of his life by shaking hands with a German as their circus-trained horses missed the faces of the wounded by inches. There were many others too, all overflowing with heart interest, which were relegated to the bar parlours of country hotels or the reception-rooms of dull provincial mayors where their monosyllabic guests are entertained.

Looking back and remembering the things, not only of rare beauty but of absorbing interest, which took their place and which now in their turn have been ousted by radio sets and labour-saving appliances, one not only sorrows at their passing but grieves to think of the many pleasures people of to-day miss by being condemned to live only with pretty things which have neither history nor period to encircle and recommend them.

To-day it is the fashion for those who delight in vacant virgin walls to scoff at the often maybe somewhat overburdened rooms of the Vintage Years; but because they love to revel in a decorative well of loneliness, and are content to see an odd volume married to a silver cigarette-box upon a brightly polished metal table, a shelf devoid of everything save a few unreturned library books guarding a vase in which a drooping tulip apologizes for its existence, a few chairs designed for short tenancies rather than repose, a settee offering but small encouragement to an ardent spirit, and little else except perhaps a standard lamp, the sole support of an aged shade, they must not forget all the imaginative happiness the art and industry of the centuries presented to their grandfathers.

The real value of priceless possessions is as nothing compared

with the visions they can conjure up of those to whom they once belonged. Look, seated at that Jacobean table, are there not strange armed men, planning some forlorn hope or dangerous enterprise—all sworn to secrecy, for they are well aware that walls have ears in these Jacobite days? And to whom belong those "Lobster Tails," only a century ago discovered hidden in a Somersetshire barn? Are they the helmets of Cromwell's men who waited in ambush for soldiers loyal to their King? Who, I wonder, brandishes that Toledo blade—one of these which were smuggled from Spain in barrels made for British fisher folk? What a romance could we not weave around it! And what a tale that targe could tell—of Rob Roy, perhaps, calling his men to swell the fray at Aberfoyle? Or, thinking of more gentle things—whose were the pretty hands that touched so daintily the keyboard of that old spinet? And what of the lover at her side who must have drawn that chair closer and closer—one of white enamel and flowered silk, on which Garrick may have sat for his friend Reynolds in his house by Newport Street? Are not these things alive, and could they not whisper into a sympathetic ear memories of darkened rooms and burning kisses, of plot and passion, love and hate, which all, like silken threads, ran through the fabric of that breathing world which we call yesterday. Alas, compared with them their modern substitutes are poor indeed, for their crests are only a manufacturer's stamp, their history a Bond Street bargain or an unpaid bill.

In the Nineties, Piccadilly, St. James's Street, Pall Mall, Bond Street, Park Lane, Berkeley Square, Hyde Park and the thoroughfares which led from these fashionable neighbourhoods were sacred precincts into which no one who was not of Society proper or improper ever dared to venture. To have met a man or woman of the common herd walking within this magic circle would have been as unlikely as to have seen a salmon in a gravel pit, or a sweep carrying his brushes into Ascot's Royal Enclosure. Indeed, Hyde Park itself might well have had placards displayed over its many entrances: "This is a garden only for those who sit in the seats of the Mighty. Trespassers will be prosecuted." On Sundays, for instance, between the hours of 12 and 1.30 the Church Parade, as it was called, was a function at which everyone who was anyone

attended religiously. A song sung by the humble chronicler in a play called "The Catch of the Season" was written eulogizing this fashionable hour and a half, and had as its refrain :

The Church Parade
It is the thing.
The Church Parade
When in full swing
Is a thing to look and wonder at ;
For oh ! the wealth displayed
Of the millinery art
And the costumes smart
At the Church Parade.

Which explains that it was the last thing *in* shows and that the world of fashion knew itself to be *on* show.

On weekdays Society took the air between 10 and 12 in Rotten Row on horseback, lovely ladies riding side-saddle in covert coats and tailor-made safety skirts cut below the flanks of their high-stepping steeds, whose manners were as perfect as those of their marvellous-looking mistresses.

The military slacks for men at this time had gone out, and brown Russian leather or patent top-boots were an unwritten law, gaiters being worn only by grooms, except when liveried servants with cockades on their top-hats followed their ladies at a respectful distance. These well-mounted custodians wore black top-boots with tan turnovers which went extraordinarily well with their white, tight-fitting buckskin breeches.

No two people seem to agree as to why the Row, surrounded as it is by stately trees and flower-beds of rare beauty, was christened "Rotten." Many are the reasons given ; the two, however, which seem the most likely are (a) that "Rotten" being derived from the word "rotteran," to muster, means that this part of Hyde Park was "muster row"—a meeting-place ; or (b) that the word "Rotten" was given the Row because of the soft tan spread over the bricks which are its foundation.

While it would be ridiculous to suppose that the past should not on occasion doff its hat to the present, still I think if the Park of the Nineties could be seen by the 2s. 6d. an hour Parkites of to-day, they would understand Sir Walter Gilbey's criticisms of "the cap and jumper Brigade" and the "no hat Hussars" and— is it too much to pray for ?—take the advice of a great gentleman

who knows as much, and probably more, about horses and horsemanship than any Judge who ever lived.

It was seldom that bad riding was seen in the Park in Edwardian days except by strange-looking men who, having made fortunes on the Stock Exchange during the boom in the Kaffir Market, learned to become equestrian dentists and showed daylight as they rode and bumped, that daylight of which their shareholders had been so anxious to obtain a glimpse.

Discussing these olive-skinned millionaires, Sir William Gilbert described one of them as "a horrible fellow!" "I saw him," he said, "in the Park yesterday riding in a suit of blue funk."

Some of the more adventurous of these late-in-life sportsmen went in for a little mild hunting. The Royal Buckhounds, which met at Ascot, was a very favourite pack of theirs which they delighted in patronizing *en masse*, especially on Easter Mondays. The Field on these occasions seldom numbered less than two hundred, composed mostly of bulls and bears, and was a sight for blind eyes.

The face of that perfect Raeburn picture of a nobleman, the late Lord Ribblesdale, who was Master of The Queen's, was a study as he watched the strange assortment who came to join him in the hunting of the King of the Forest. At one of these Bank Holiday gatherings he was naturally very angry to see a by no means welcome follower riding gaily among hounds. Unable to call him off, he galloped furiously after him and shouted, "Damn you, sir, what d'you think you're doing?"

"I can't help it," panted the tailor-made man.

"Oh! can't you?" said His Lordship. "And what may be your name, sir?"

"Nightingale," replied the stockbroker.

"Oh, is it?" replied Lord Ribblesdale, as he turned away in disgust. "Tuneful devil, aren't you?"

After luncheon the Park was generally deserted, and remained so until between the hours of 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when a stream of carriages, victorias, landaus, barouches, a cabriolet or two, and often men driving tandems or phaetons, appeared.

That no smarter turnouts were to be seen anywhere else in the world is certain, or in them any such adorable women. To name only a few of the outstandingly lovely ladies of the day who during the season never failed to pass and repass the Magazine

several times, and afterwards pulled up to talk to their friends on the benches or those who thronged the path which led from Birdcage Walk to Hyde Park Corner, were the Countess of Warwick, Millicent Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Portland, the Duchess of Leinster, Lady de Grey, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs. Cornwallis-West, and Mrs. Langtry. Hardly less dazzling to look upon were the group of beautiful women connected with the theatre, which included such favourites as Miss Mary Anderson, unquestionably the loveliest actress of her day; Miss Connie Gilchrist, afterwards the Countess of Orkney; Miss Belle Bilton, who married Lord Clancarty; Nellie Bromley, Letty Lind, Agnes Hewitt, Phyllis Broughton, Kate Vaughan, who was the first dancer to appear in long skirts on the English stage, Sylvia Grey, another divine dancer, Maud Millett, Olga Brandon of the midnight eyes, and many lesser lights whose photographs were to be seen in shop-windows throughout the country.

Never could there have been a more perfect face than that of Lady Warwick, with its beautifully cut cameo features and marvellous eyes. What pictures were Lady de Grey, Lady Dudley and the Duchess of Leinster; while Millicent Duchess of Sutherland and—oh well! a volume would be needed if an attempt were made to describe and pay homage to these gloriously beautiful people. Limited space must therefore be the excuse for not pursuing a subject on which one could enthuse for ever.

Perhaps, though, one may be permitted to speak of a lady around whom Romance had woven a golden web. This was Mrs. Langtry, the daughter of Dean le Breton of Jersey, whose statuesque bearing and exquisite loveliness, and the fact that not only Society in general but His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales's very exclusive set took her to their hearts, caught the imagination of the public, who heralded her as "The Jersey Lily" and crowded to get a glimpse of her at every opportunity. In the Park it was no unusual sight to see men and women stand on chairs to watch her as she drove by. She was painted by her fellow-countryman, Sir John Millais, and for a long time everything in London was "Langtry," from fashion-plates to face-powders, while her photographs must have sold in thousands. Few women before or since have had so great a vogue as this gracious and deservedly popular lady. Later she created a minor sensation by going on the stage, for those were the days when

"Well, sir," replied the verger, "last Sunday there was a Confirmation Service held here, and the Bishop who conducted it was short-sighted, in fact, so short-sighted, sir, that he mistook these globes for two bald heads and confirmed them both."

Another well-known figure in the Row in the Nineties, though of an earlier vintage than this master of the witty pencil, was a fine horseman by the name of Mr. Hugh Drummond, a real Corinthian, famed for his gay doings in the world of Bohemia. He had a most attractive personality, and his practical jokes and often wild pranks were forgiven and applauded by all who knew him, while his answers, being often more ready than his banking account, enabled his friends to dine out on them most successfully.

It was when riding one morning with Sir Francis Jeune, afterwards Lord St. Helier, the then President of the Divorce Court, that he made a most admirable reply to that famous legal light.

Sir Francis was remonstrating with him about the restless sort of life he was leading, and finished his friendly exhortation by saying, "My dear Hughie, why on earth don't you marry and settle down?"

To which our hero replied, "Oh! for heaven's sake, Judge, don't talk shop!"

It was the irrepressible Mr. Drummond who, seeing a beautiful though slightly intoxicated lady put her arms round the neck of one of his guests, stood up at the supper-table and with great solemnity said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you a toast. It is, 'Absinthe makes the Tart grow fonder'."

For this remark the Town very rightly gave him full marks.

His reason for saying on one occasion that he had long since ceased to believe in gratitude was by no means unfunny. It appears that one summer afternoon he saw a bulldog fly at an inoffensive-looking donkey in the shafts of a vegetable-cart. "I was terrified," he said, "that the dog, who had the donkey by the throat, would kill it; so I flung myself on the Emblem of Britain's Might, and after a desperate struggle, in which I was severely bitten, I succeeded in pulling the dog away. It was a long and deadly encounter, and at the end of it I found myself in the gutter, lying on top of the dog, with my back to the donkey. And what d'you think the brute did? It bent down and took the seat out of my trousers. Isn't that enough to make you cease to believe in human nature?"

It was while staying on a visit with the late Sir Henry Meux

that he sent a note to a friend who had written to enquire how he was enjoying himself. The answer was short and to the point. It ran :

"Enormously, my dear fellow. They bring up champagne with the shaving-water, and the Bart's clothes fit me to a 'T'."

From what one remembers of the house of Sir Henry and Lady Meux, Theobalds (pronounced, by the way, "Tibbles," though why I don't know) must have been a quaint place. Sir Henry, who was an immensely rich man and was nothing if not a character, married a very beautiful Alhambra chorus girl called Valerie Rhys, who turned out to be not only a first-class business woman but a shrewd judge of men and things, and a most charitable lady. They entertained lavishly, and the pheasant-shooting on the estate was some of the best in the country. At one of the stands the guests had the unique experience of being able to take birds coming high over Temple Bar, owing to the fact that this historic gateway had been transferred from the City and set up in the Park. There were innocent-looking wells in the coverts, and it is said that, while waiting for a drive to commence, any guest of an inquisitive turn of mind was certain to find a bottle of "The Widow" in them asking to be uncorked.

On the Baronet's death, Lady Meux's hand and passbook were sought by many a wooer, but though some of them hoped to be called they were never chosen.

A gallant Bohemian, a contemporary of the afore-mentioned Mr. Drummond in his later days, although of a less volatile type, was a popular figure in hunting circles and the night life of the Town, Mr. Frank Otter. His wit was perfect, but, unlike Drummond's quick-fire replies, was delivered with great deliberation and apparently unconscious humour. He affected a slight Cockney accent and was always ready to offer his friends a glass of what he called "Champine Woine."

It was he who, on being asked, "Is your mother entertaining this season?" drawled in reply, "Not very!"; and to a bumptious and ill-mannered youth who had been extremely rude to him he delivered himself of a sentence which not only flattened out the young man but was also far from complimentary to the rest of his relations. He said :

"You don't seem to have the slightest notion of how to behave, and after giving the matter considerable thought I am of opinion

that had your father spent more of your mother's immoral earnings on your education you would not even then have been a gentleman."

It was "The Otter," as he was affectionately called, who, after a very late night, knocked up a well-known tailor by the name of Paul, whose premises were in Conduit Street. It was four o'clock in the morning, and greatly incensed at having his sleep cut as short as his customer's coats, Mr. Paul opened his bedroom window and shouted to the roisterer's enquiry, "Yes, sir, my name is Paul. What do you want, waking me at this ungodly hour?"

"Oh, nothing in particular," came the answer. "I was only wondering if you ever received an answer to that long letter you wrote to the Ephesians?"

This probably happened on the night that Mr. Otter was returning home from a fancy-dress ball where he had been asked in the refreshment-room—a pleasant place, in which he had spent the entire evening—what character he was supposed to represent. He replied drowsily, as he supported the bar, "Well, dear fellow, I came here as Louis the Fourteenth, but I'm leaving as Louis Roederer."

A grand sportsman was The Otter; would that there were a few more like him about to-day! His remarks on the blackouts would have been illuminating. He was never without an answer—as, for instance, his reply to a policeman who told him one night as he sauntered through the Park after dinner that it was time to leave. "Oh no, not a bit of it," said he. "I intend sleeping here, but mind you, only on condition that you shut the gates. It does get so draughty."

There were merry fellows in these merry days, for London was chock-full of personalities. The old Corinthians might have departed, but new ones had taken their place, and London was a real playground in the declining days of a great Queen, so no excuse need be offered for labelling the end of the last century Vintage Years. They were gay because they were happy, for the river of life on which men and women sailed their boats flowed so placidly that they had leisure to enjoy the many good things that came their way.

The acid test of contentment in any period has ever been the quality of the manners of its people, and so, if proof is needed that

the Nineties were really happy, it can be truthfully said that never at any time have those in every walk of life understood better what courtesy and a genteel feeling meant than those who were fortunate enough to live in these delightful times.

Young people listened and bowed respectfully to greater knowledge. "Please" and "Thank you" had not been erased from the dictionary, and the language of the gutter had not found its way through the keyholes of Mayfair. Cocktails had not prepared the way for digestive biscuits, and nursing mothers had not learned to flick cigarette ash from their sacred breasts. Women were respected and their domestic secrets were not a subject for the multitude, while the geography of the cloak-room was the last thing ever discussed in mixed company.

Young men were grateful for the smiles of their lady friends, and young women had not learned that their latch-keys were their only necessary chaperons at bottle-parties and afterwards. Robbed of this doubtful freedom, those of the Roaring Forties may turn up their artificial eyelashes and perhaps wonder how any day can be called Gay without it; but in this they would be wrong, for what they fear they might lose on their rickety roundabouts they would certainly gain on the more secure swings.

Easy conquest is the mother of unappreciated habit, but, being so, the quantity of pleasure must not by any means be mistaken for the quality of our enjoyment.

The Nineties were gay because there were fewer oranges to squeeze dry with loving fingers and the memory of them lingered. Annual fixtures were red-letter days and not merely part of a busy routine. Great events were nine-day wonders, not merely forgotten stepping-stones to the next sensation. It was the unbounded appreciation of real happiness that made those bygone times gay. The paper caps of the Christmas party which create such merriment were put on when the flaming pudding made its entrance, and worn till the dustman called. To toss them aside in the dining-room is to rob Musical Chairs in the drawing-room of half its fun.

Edwardians adored their paper caps. The oranges of the Forties are so plentiful that Mr. Blasé is generally only on a nodding acquaintance with Mr. Gay.

One thing among many others which certainly made for happiness in the Nineties was the fact that everyone had the most implicit faith in that good old rock of Gibraltar—The Family Doctor.

The psycho-analyst had mercifully not arrived to feed fat upon Mayfair, and consequently there were very few neurotic old ladies in their early twenties to be met with. The thirst for a knowledge of obscure diseases, hinted at by the specialists who were themselves stumbling about in abysmal darkness with a rush-light, had not become a parlour game, and people who were eager to ascertain the possible results of impossible ailments were practically non-existent. Ignorance and bliss were the happiest of married couples, content with the badly brushed top-hat, the black bag and the best bedside manner, composed as it was of geniality, pomposity and solemnity.

The old-fashioned physician brought into every dwelling a sense of security, even to the patient who was gasping for breath. His discovery of the obvious was a real achievement, and his prescription given to alleviate suffering was an extremely safe one if nothing else: in life, a remedy of which a "second opinion" would approve; and in death, a concoction which the Coroner would applaud.

The world went very well then, for as there is no recorded case of a departed spirit lingering by the bedside to have a last look at the prison which had held it, for the purpose of telling the family friend that he had made an ass of himself both in his diagnosis and his treatment, all concerned, even the expectant relatives, were more than pleased.

No doubt, owing to the use of threadbare classic remedies, a briefer life was here our portion, but on balance the Nineties scored; for existence in those days, prior to the calling in of the Undertaker's senior partner, was decidedly more tranquil, being neither germ-minded, Serum-minded, nor patent-medicine-minded. So far as the pharmacopoeia was concerned, our forebears had very wisely made up their minds to be absent-minded, realizing that although a little widow is a dangerous thing, a small amount of medical knowledge is infinitely more terrifying. In the Good Old Times a scratch was a scratch, and not labelled as a probable cousin of Tetanus. Antiseptic gargles were not served as a liqueur after partaking of a doubtful sardine. An amorous glance was not considered to be the first signs of ophthalmic goitre; a stiff neck

not a perished cartilage ; an injured football shin not Paget's disease ; and a pain in the middle after eating green apples not a reason for ringing up the nearest gynaecologist or abdominal surgeon.

Wonderful as doctors were in the days when Koch came to the aid of the consumptive, in 1896, and Dr. Pierre and Madame Curie were to astonish the world by their discovery of radium, the diagnosis of the general practitioner was not always infallible, for none can forget the worthy man, well versed in the science of Medicine, who for six weeks treated a patient for jaundice and then discovered he was a Chinaman !

Forsaking the mildly humorous side of Medicine, it is well to set down the world's gratitude to Sir Frederick Treves, who was the pioneer in surgery for the removal of the appendix, an operation that has saved the lives of countless men and women who, before this great surgeon's discovery, would have died as many thousands had done when their condition was attributed to inflammatory conditions which, owing to faulty diagnosis, refused to yield to treatment. It is sad to remember that Providence decreed that this very operation should have been the cause of Sir Frederick Treves losing his own daughter. To-day practice has made perfect, and danger, except through complications arising, has been practically eliminated.

It must be realized, also, that in 1895 the blessing of the X-Ray came to the aid of suffering humanity, and when we remember, too, that in these Vintage Years the inventions of that world-benefactor Marconi not only linked up distant lands with civilization but was the means of saving as many lives at sea as did Lister's discovery on the operating-table, who will deny that the cry, "Hats off to the Nineties," is not well merited ?

Oh yes, the Nineties were carefree and by no means disease-minded ; they were happy till the crash came, and then, as now, bowed their heads to the inevitable and said, "So what ?"

When the quill pen so beloved by the city clerk as an ornament for his ear which, if not particularly ornate, conveyed to his employer the often erroneous impression that he possessed a servant so loyal that he even worked for him in his sleep, ceased to be, the means of setting on paper the wishes of gentlemen making their "wills and wonts" was discovered in the shape of a steel nib which took its place, much to the delight of many a shivering goose and gander.

The reason for mentioning these simple new-fangled gadgets is that, some of them having their oval sides so designed that they were capable of holding an appreciable amount of ink, they caused professional inventors to set to work to rob inkwells of their right to stain fingers and ruin table-cloths. This they succeeded in doing, and it was not long before the public hailed with joy the arrival of the fountain-pen.

The penny-in-the-slot machines were also a product of the Nineties, and although at first small metal boxes of wax vestas were all that they contained, very soon men of enterprise decided that they were capable of supplying luxuries and necessities, ranging from cigarettes to chocolates and from postage stamps to chewing-gum. It is unlikely, of course, that they will ever be able to cash our cheques or lend us money, but in these robot days who can prophesy what the future has in store for us? Indeed, to-morrow the slot machine may be the only way a tax-burdened population will have of obtaining samples for a penny with which to keep body and soul together. Who can tell?

It must be difficult to realize that the Parcel Post, now as much part of the national life as the penny stamp, was quite unknown to Mr. Mulready or Mr. Rowland Hill, or to imagine how, prior to the middle Eighties, trade and the individual managed without it. It is extraordinary to think that so great a necessity had not been thought of, and curious that when the postal authorities informed the nation that not only letters but almost every conceivable sort of merchandise up to a quite considerable specified weight could be handled, the public were so taken aback by the announcement that at first they were more amused than grateful. Jokes were not only levelled at this new form of transport, but comic songs were written in its honour and sung in music halls and the Christmas pantomimes. The refrain of one of them was,

A baby and a box of pills,
A puppy and a rat,
A roley-poley pudding
And an old top-hat,
A pound of tallow candles
And a round of buttered toast
All came to me this morning
By the Parcels Post.

But let us return to the lower end of Piccadilly.

The Park itself, save for the people who frequent it, is exactly as it was in the Nineties, and indeed has not changed since the days when Brummell was cut there by his King, and Dandies lolled and leaned against its same age-old iron railings as they watched the D'Orsays and the Blessingtons take the air.

Happily, Apsley House, in which England's mighty Captain had dwelt, still stands sentinel, grim and grey, defying the modern architect and his near-by barrack-like skyscrapers, which have taken from Park Lane much of the beauty of London's former Holy of Holies. It was not till the Nineties that Dorchester House was shaken to its foundations, when it witnessed pick and shovel levelling its ancient neighbours to make way for mansions designed for "the Wise Men of the East End" who had made money enough to "come up West." But although this first shot took effect and the distant rumble of Stock Exchange artillery was heard by the Nineties, they proudly withstood the siege and left a more money-minded generation to capitulate to Croesus and Commerce.

When Dorchester House itself bowed its noble head, the first blow that was struck by the housebreaker on the portico must have left an indelible scar on the heart of its owner, a wound as deep and enduring as that which fell on the whole of Park Lane itself. The headsman had claimed its Queen, and the rumbling of the tumbril which bore her to the guillotine was the signal that the most exclusive part of residential London, ground on which even a millionaire with the usual hide of a rhinoceros feared to tread, had ceased to be. Shops and hotels are now the gaudy tombstones of a gentle age.

Is it the wind that moans at midnight so uneasily through the trees across the way? Maybe. But at a hazard one may guess, more like it is a requiem sung by those who once dwelt there and have wakened to turn restlessly in their graves.

Dorchester House was a classic example of the Great Houses of London, and its owner, the late Sir George Holford, was likewise a perfect example of what every Englishman should be. Tall, handsome, and with the most charming manners, he was the Equerry and confidential friend of His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, and continued to serve him when he came to the throne with undying love and loyalty until the hour

when England mourned the death of a King among Kings and a Man among Men.

When the Shazadah visited this country, Sir George Holford obliged the Government by placing Dorchester House at the disposal of that powerful Persian ruler, who with a retinue of dusky noblemen and innumerable native servants went into residence and lived there in Oriental splendour. Here the customs of his country were religiously observed, even to the welcoming of the Royal Goats, who wandered at will through the spacious halls and lovely reception-rooms. Slightly in anger but more in sorrow, the owner of this historic mansion heard of many strange happenings that took place in his home, hallowed by tradition and the memory of all that was most beautiful in the many periods it had known so well. Goats nibbling the carpets and otherwise amusing themselves were out of tune with the European mind, but, although many hints were given, there was nothing to be done, as Oriental potentates are unaccustomed to be thwarted in their actions or desires.

However, even Sir George's patience was exhausted when a really incredible piece of vandalism was reported. It appears that after inspecting a famous arms factory in the Midlands the Shazadah returned to London the proud possessor of a miniature Gatling gun (the father of the Lewis and the Bren) which had been presented to him by the directors as a memento of his visit. It was a wonderful little weapon, perfect in every detail, even down to the belts of cartridges with which it could be served and fired automatically. No jewel could have pleased the royal visitor more, and to show his appreciation of the gift he delighted to amuse himself by setting it up on a table in one of the salons and firing at the objects of virtu in the priceless cabinets.

What happened to the Goats and the Gatling, history does not relate; all that we are certain of is that the Shazadah is dead and the Goats, if alive, are far too old to give milk.

In writing of works of art, it was in the Nineties that Sargent was commissioned by the famous dealer, Mr. Wirtheimer, to paint a portrait of himself and his three daughters. It was, of course, one of the outstanding pictures of the year and was labelled by a wag, "Mr. Wirtheimer and his three objects of virtue"! In the foreground of the picture Sargent painted a pet dog of the family, with its tongue hanging out. No one ever knew whether

this was done by accident or design, but as Mr. Wirtheimer was blessed with a somewhat protruding lower lip and his three daughters were all extremely like their father, the canine touch was voted extremely amusing, though perhaps a trifle cruel.

Another distinguished foreigner to visit England about this time was Li Hung-Chang, then the most powerful statesman in the Chinese Empire. The nation took a great liking to this mysterious, dignified and important personage, and he was received with acclamation whenever he appeared in public. Urbane and inscrutable, his thoughts were locked in a safe the key of which he had left in the keeping of his Emperor. A Talleyrand of diplomats, no more subtle way could have been found for impressing upon England the vastness of his country and its teeming millions than the apparently simple remark he made on being asked to subscribe to a fund for the relief of the dependants of a number of men who had lost their lives in a collicry disaster. He contributed a princely sum for the stricken families, and in doing so enquired sympathetically how many miners had perished. He was told about eighty.

"That is sad," he commented; "but in China we never open a subscription list unless the number of victims is at least a hundred thousand."

It is only in the nature of things that the old order must for ever change, but while a sigh is permissible when remembering the passing of century-old landmarks and the goodly Hyde Park company of the Nineties, let it not be tinged with bitterness. Let rather those who were of that time be thankful for the never-fading memories which their London has bequeathed to them.

Gone are the perfectly matched horses that stepped nose-high so proudly, for which their owners paid anything from five hundred to a thousand guineas.

Gone are the footmen with their long fawn, silver-buttoned coats, who sat with their arms folded beside the coachman; and vanished for ever are the spotted pluni-puddings who, running beneath the back wheels of the carriages, did much to complete a perfect picture. These were the Dalmatians, which were once called by a Mrs. Malaprop of the time "my damnation dogs."

Tempus Fugit—admirably translated by a public schoolboy as "Time does Fidget."

In thinking of boys and their howlers, one perpetrated by a

pupil of that splendid and much-beloved schoolmaster, the late Mr. Tom Pellatt, is first-class. The famous Tom had set a history paper, and in it the scholars were invited to make any notes they could remember concerning Queen Elizabeth. The answer one boy gave was, "She was known as the Virgin Queen, but they only called her this behind her back." Another lad, equally vague but dimly conscious that something was lacking in Her Majesty's matrimonial arrangements, wrote, "As a Queen Elizabeth was quite a success, but as a Virgin she was not so satisfactory."

In writing of Hyde Park I remember that in 1890 the then Lord Montagu of Beaulieu told me that when he was a young man he had shot snipe at Hyde Park Corner. His Lordship was well over sixty at this time, so at a rough guess it means that in the year 1840 these birds of the tricky flight paid an annual visit to London, and were to be met with not far from where St. George's Hospital now stands. I am sure my memory is not at fault in recording this as a fact, for it must be remembered that the Cadogan Estate had not been reclaimed and was marshland in those days, though it seems extraordinary to realize that such a thing as shooting game was possible in this neighbourhood only fifty years before the existing buildings were erected. The late Lord Montagu—then the Honourable John Scott-Montagu, himself one of the finest shots in Britain—said that his father in the days of the muzzle-loader had few equals over dogs. What careful and considered thought these ancient weapons must have given to those who used them when birds were flushed from turnip and stubble. Still, if the ramrod and powder-horn period made for smaller bags, it undoubtedly called for more accurate shooting on the part of the ordinary sportsman, for time was then the essence of the shooter's contract, a thing which to-day the owner of a hammerless ejector has no reason to consider.

In the days of his youth the writer had the privilege of being an intimate friend of John Montagu, and his name conjures up many a happy hour spent in his company, either shooting wild fowl at Sowley Ponds or popping a dry fly over the trout at Harford Hole, or, when there were slack days from covert shooting, negotiating the wily mallard teal and widgeon on the Beaulieu River in the early winter mornings, when at dawn many

a time two score were gathered from one shot of a punt gun. It is a delight to pay tribute to a so charming though, at times, somewhat erratic personality. Brilliant in everything he undertook, had it not been for his boyish and restless disposition, which was the cause of his leaving many a project unfinished in his eagerness to find fresh fields to conquer, there is little doubt that he would have left behind him the memory of a great figure in our national life. Blessed with enormous vitality and unbounded enthusiasm, he was never content unless he had a dozen irons in as many fires. Mechanical transport, which was in its infancy in the Nineties, owed much to his untiring energy, for as an engineer who had served a hard apprenticeship in the yards he not only realized the infinite possibilities of the aeroplane, but was one of the most ardent pioneers of motoring. An old and lonely man once wrote a book called *Empty Chairs*. There were many empty hearts when the second Montagu of Beaulieu was beckoned onwards.

In remembering the famous shots of yesterday, there were several who not infrequently were capable of having their four driven birds dead in the air at the same time. Though no doubt this feat may be performed to-day by the aces of the moor, two coming and two going, there were in the Nineties sportsmen whose names are written in indelible ink on the pages of many a Game Book.

Among these super-shots were His Highness Prince Duleep Singh, Lord Ripon, Lord Walsingham, the Hon. Harry Stonor, the Hon. John Scott-Montagu, Mr. Archibald Stuart-Wortley, and last but not least, His Late Majesty King George the Fifth.

Those were the seasons of sensational bags, and it was no uncommon thing on the best day at Six Mile Bottom, Captain Machell's shoot, to hear of a thousand brace of partridges falling to eight guns. So keen a sportsman was Machell that he never gave his guests anything like a meal when out shooting. He provided each of them with a packet of sandwiches, his motto being, "Heavy lunches make light bags."

In mentioning records, the largest number of grouse that ever fell to a single gun was the one that still stands, set up in the Nineties by Lord Ripon when, for a wager of £5000, he killed a thousand brace at Blubberhouses in Yorkshire. He achieved this remarkable feat standing in a large circular butt with three loaders.

At the end of the day, although a thousand brace had been gathered, this great shot, to make doubly sure, decided on continuing, which he did in a failing light, and immediately accounted for another ten brace with twenty cartridges.

In writing of records, there was a sporting old nobleman in the Nineties famed for the way he pulled the long bow when giving details of his exploits with rod and gun. As his tarradiddles hurt no one, he was listened to with good humour, and being never contradicted, he at last, it must be assumed, absolutely believed his own stories. His right and left woodcocks were an everyday occurrence, and six driven birds with two barrels were to him by no means an infrequent occurrence. The wildest story he ever told, though, concerned a stag, a salmon and a brace of grouse. Once, when he was out stalking, it appeared that a river ran between a beast on the skyline and his own bank. As he pulled the trigger a salmon rose, the bullet went right through the fish, killed his twelve-pointer, and the recoil from his rifle was so great that he fell backwards on a clump of heather and so secured a brace of grouse. Truly a remarkable feat, it must be agreed—a tale which even the famous Louis de Rougemont would have rightly applauded as a thing often done by himself.

Before the law of England forbade it, pigeon-shooting was an extremely popular pastime, and fortunes were won and lost at it not only on the match but on the single bird. There were many professionals who earned large incomes at Monte Carlo, amongst them being the famous Robert Roberts and Walter Blake. The Earl of Rosslyn, "Harry" to his friends and "Erskine" when he went on the stage for a brief spell, seldom missed backing himself at a twenty-five-yard rise for the fun and excitement of the sport.

A most attractive man was Harry Rosslyn, and one who was always ready to embark on any adventure in which the gambler's chance loomed large. Indeed, he even invented an infallible system for breaking the bank at Monte Carlo. This appears to have worked splendidly in the seclusion of his own rooms, but needless to say he was only one of hundreds of other punters who found that the small ivory ball which ticked its way into the even chances under the glaring light of a public gaming-table was as wayward as a child, as difficult as a stupid woman, and as uncertain as a cross-bred dog.

No finer pigeon-shot ever loaded his own cartridges than

Mr. Aubrey Coventry. A match with an Italian, thought by many to be as good as himself, was arranged. This took place in race week at Brighton on the course, before an immense crowd, during the luncheon hour, when a wonderful exhibition of iron nerve was displayed by this well-known British sportsman. The stakes were large and the betting heavy. The match was two hundred of the best blue rocks procurable. Shot after shot the opponents were even, until the score stood at ninety-nine birds all. The multitude held their breath, for what happened at this last trap meant either a draw or that a giant at his particular game would bite the dust.

It was Aubrey Coventry's turn to shoot first. Apparently not in the smallest degree disturbed, he stuffed a sandwich into his mouth and sauntered casually to the mark. The trap was pulled, the bird rose and was grassed on the instant. Whether shooting with a crust of bread sticking out between his teeth was a piece of consummate generalship on Coventry's part or not was never known, but it so unnerved the Italian that when his bird rose into the blue he missed an absolute sitter and so lost the day.

Amongst other things, Aubrey Coventry will long be remembered for having reorganized the Orleans, making it one of the most delightful clubs in London. His brother was Arthur Coventry, the famous starter, who previously was one of the best-known figures on the Turf as a gentleman rider.

As a "dry" fly fisherman, there was no better in the kingdom than this popular man. Apropos of his skill, a facetious gentleman who rather fancied himself as a disciple of the gentle Izaak, attempting to score off him by asking what he would do if he were fishing up-stream with a gale of wind blowing in his face, took a toss, as Arthur Coventry might have said, at the first fence.

"Do," came the answer, "do? I should either ask the trout to turn down-stream or go and borrow a butterfly net."

In his class as a master of the fine and far-off art there were few who were his equal, among them being Sir Edward Grey, the Marquis of Granby, afterwards the Duke of Rutland, and Mr. Willie Warde, the inimitable Gaiety comedian and most beautiful of dancers, who not only made his own spliced green-hearts but delighted in gathering the natural fly as it floated down-stream towards its doom, so that he might tie an imitation at the water's edge.

An amusing story is told of Mr. Warde, who, although possessed of the greatest sense of humour, had a sad face and an almost pathetic manner, even when recounting many of the funny things that had happened to him in his long life of brilliant achievement.

It appears that, being uncertain as to what flies were most suitable for a seldom-fished Scottish loch, he entered a well-known tacklemaker's shop in the hope of gaining some information on the subject. Behind the counter was a very up-and-doing young salesman who at once proceeded to describe the only fly that would be killing on the particular water Mr. Warde was enquiring about. "Ah," said the young man, "the wings should be made of the light brown colour peculiar to the Japanese oyster-catcher, the back of the fly must be dressed with the down from the breast of the 'oozle chuff' or Chinese web-footed skylark, while it is absolutely essential that the hackle should be of the hairs taken from the ears of the sable bear found only in Siberia." "Really?" said Warde; "and I live in Brixton."

To the writer's lasting sorrow, Mr. Warde died early in the year 1941 at the age of eighty. An extraordinary genius in his way, he had forgotten more about the Theatre than most men ever knew, and in a great measure was responsible for much of Mr. George Edwardes's uninterrupted success at the Gaiety and Daly's. If there be rivers in Heaven, may it always be "Mayfly Time" for this upright and simple man.

While letter-writing as an art was unfortunately becoming extinct at the time Lord Chesterfield, apparently having nothing particular to do, decided to occupy his time by addressing his son at great length on paper, it practically disappeared altogether with the arrival of shorthand and typewriting.

Conversation at its best, however, was an outstanding feature of the dinner-table and club lounge towards the end of the Victorian era. The wisecrack—a form of humour which, although amusing in itself, dams the river of brilliant and easy-flowing dialogue—was still unborn. This purely American product is very like a shot from a pistol that hits the bull's-eye, rings the bell, and compels everyone to load again in an endeavour to raise another laugh, ignoring entirely any continuity of thought on the subject under discussion. However, well-turned phrases in the Prince of Wales's

day were the rule and not the exception, for they fell in abundance from the lips of the many masters of epigram who flourished during the last ten years of the nineteenth century. Among the constellation of stars who shone brightly as manufacturers of verbal fireworks Oscar Wilde stood out pre-eminently. A prince of Yoricks, he was one of the few of whom it could never be said that an impromptu speech was not worth the paper it was written on; for a table-cloth was his manuscript, and space a writing-block for his stylographic tongue. His sallies fell from the clouds, and as a rule had very little quality of mercy about them.

Who would not have to his credit Wilde's remark to a gushing lady who persisted in claiming acquaintance with him? Smilingly he said, "Madame, I remember your name, but I can never think of your face." Or his telegram to a bore who, having pestered him to come to lunch and ultimately succeeding in pinning him down to a date a month ahead, at the last moment received the most devastating excuse possible. It was, "I deeply regret that owing to a subsequent engagement I shall be unable to be with you to-day." On being introduced to a famous French lady who, plain beyond the dreams of any beauty parlour, thinking to disarm him when she was introduced, said, "Mr. Wilde, I am the ugliest woman in Paris," he replied, wishing to give superlative praise where praise was undoubtedly due, "No, dear lady, in the world!" To a very second-rate author who had insisted on his seeing a piece he had written and who enquired anxiously what he thought of it, he answered, "My dear friend, I am perfectly certain it is the best play I ever slept through!"

Even in his hour of tragedy, wit and humour were the twin guardians of this sensitive and misguided genius, for when the Governor of Reading Gaol sent for him and said, "I am sorry to have to break to you some very bad news—your favourite aunt is dead," Wilde replied, "Thank you, sir, I am much relieved; I thought you were going to tell me that Mr. Wilkins had been elected President of the Royal Academy."

Bravery in dire adversity is a blessing from an all-forgiving and understanding Creator, and this was vouchsafed to Oscar Wilde when, forsaken and alone, he mounted a Calvary of his own making. Is there any greater example of patient endurance than his when, after having suffered mental torture in a London prison he was standing on Croydon Station *en route* for Reading

Gaol, handcuffed to two burglars in a downpour of rain that had drenched him to the skin, he turned to a warder and said, "Sir, if this is the way Queen Victoria treats her convicts, she doesn't deserve to have any."

The writer had the privilege of meeting Oscar Wilde on many occasions, and never found him to be anything but a most generous and laughing Cavalier.

Of those of Wilde's contemporaries worthy to cross swords with him in the *salle d'armes* which Providence has provided for those rare and precious people, the fun-makers of the world, must be counted James McNeill Whistler, Sir William Gilbert, Mr. Joseph Comyns Carr, Mr. H. V. Higgins, Mr. Charles Brookfield, Sir Max Beerbohm, and his near relative Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree.

Sir Herbert, a most amusing and kind-hearted man, had a great gift of turning commonplaces into epigrammatic sense and nonsense. When the first Great War broke out he was in Germany, and only just managed to get back to England by the skin of his teeth. His exit from Hunland was so hurried that he left his trunks and everything he possessed, together with a motor-car, at Marienbad, and arrived in London with nothing but the clothes he stood up in. A long and difficult journey would have robbed most men of their sense of humour, but that is a thing which never deserted so good a companion as Herbert Tree. All he said when, tired out, he flung himself into an armchair at the Garrick Club, was, "I think I shall send a telegram to the Kaiser about his behaviour. Yes, I will; and I know what I'll say. I'll say, 'Sir, you once gave me a second-class order for acting; I've left you a third-class car for acting just as badly.'"

It was Whistler who, having been particularly witty one evening, so delighted Wilde that he almost shouted, "Oh! Jimmy, I wish I had said that!" Looking at him slyly, Whistler whispered, "You will."

Gilbert once spoke of a principal actress in one of his Savoy Operas whose work had disappointed him as his "misleading" lady; while, commenting on her looks, a friend observed that she had been pretty once. "No doubt," said Gilbert, "but not twice."

It was Tree who, being asked what he thought of some scantily clad dancing-girls who appeared in a ballet as sailors and soldiers, delivered himself of an admirable *mot*, murmuring in his dreamy

way, "I think they are lovely, but a trifle more navel than millinery."

The wit of Charles Brookfield, though exceedingly amusing, was wickedly critical and generally cruel to be unkind. He was by no means an admirer of Beerbohm Tree's Hamlet—it had not been one of his greatest successes—and in the first revue ever produced in England, called "Under the Clock," he impersonated that famous actor as the Moody Dane. When asked in verse why he was so mournful, he replied:

I'm dressed in black
Because I didn't go.
These are my trappings and my suits of woe.

And when, also in the same production, one of the characters enquired of a lady whose diction had probably been acquired at a school of elocution, "Why do you talk in that peculiar way?" the lines Brookfield put into the actress's mouth were:

It is the impressionist method of the day,
The modern school who don't know how to speak;
Resort to giving imitation weak
Of Ellen (Terry) whom the gifts of God inherit:
Her faults become her pupils' only merits.

On one occasion, having returned from hearing a new piece read by its author—a brilliant and successful playwright but one whose pronunciation of our tongue was often more of Oxford Circus than of Oxford—Brookfield was asked how long the reading had taken. He answered, "Oh! about three hours without the 'h's.'"

He was a sardonic humorist and never so happy as when he was sharpening his wit to pierce the weak spot in the armour of foes and friends alike. Once a fellow-member of his club rushed in, in a great state of excitement, and announced that he had just been bitten by a dog. A sympathetic companion, seeing him go to a table and commence to write feverishly, said, "It's all right, dear fellow, there's no need to make your will. All you've got to do is to get off to the Pasteur Institute at once." Brookfield joined in and observed, "Oh! he's not making his will, he's making a list of people he wants to bite."

H. V. Higgins, a wit of wits, who, among other things, for thirty years steered that most difficult ship "Grand Opera" at

Covent Garden, grew nearly as many oratorical blossoms as Tom Hood, H. J. Byron and Sydney Smith together at their best. Never was anyone quicker in the uptake than this most popular and attractive member of Clubland. One of his really priceless remarks was made to Tetrizzini, when he engaged her to appear in London for the first time. After having agreed to many fantastic clauses which the prima donna had insisted on being inserted in her contract, he said, "And now, Madame, may I enquire what salary you want?" "Certainly, of course," replied Tetrizzini. "I want five hundred pounds a night." "Do you?", said Mr. Higgins. "*Five hundred pounds a night!*" I think we are talking at cross-purposes; I'm only engaging you *to sing*."

To an enthusiastic journalist who, on November 10th, 1918, informed him that the war was over and that the Armistice would be signed on the morrow, his only comment was, "Ah, that will encourage recruiting."

Once when he had ordered some exceptionally good claret the waiter had gone through the small formality of dropping the decanter on the floor. Higgins looked volumes but said nothing until an anxious *maitre d'hôtel* rushed up full of apologies and enquired what the number of the wine was in the list. "That I've forgotten," replied Harry Higgins. "All I can tell you is that the claret on the floor appears to be 'Shattered la Feet.'"

Musicians as a body are not, as a rule, blessed with an enormous sense of humour, but the late Herman Finck, the composer and conductor, said amusing things all day and every day. For many years he was the Maestro at the Palace Theatre; and as an instance of his wit, on being asked what the terpsichorean efforts of a famous English dancer who was appearing there in a Russian costume was like he said, "Most excellent. She is funny without being Volga."

Passing a well-known photographer's shop in Baker Street one day, he and a friend, they noticed in the window a large basket of new-laid eggs. "That's odd," observed his companion. "Why eggs in a place where people come to have their pictures taken?" "Oh," answered Finck, "I expect a hen has come for a sitting"—which, it must be agreed, was pretty quick; though he probably never said anything better than his remark to a French gentleman by the name of Volnay on being introduced to him. It was a *mot* which especially delighted the lovers of those crimson Burgundies which, having been sentenced to several years' solitary confinement,

shed their prison garb to appear in cut-glass finery. Volnay was one of the thinnest men in the world and appeared not to have an ounce of flesh on his body. Finck looked at him and said, "Mr. Volnay, I am delighted to meet you—Volnay is your name, isn't it?" "Yes, it is," replied his new acquaintance. "Fancy that!" smiled Finck. "Surely it ought to be Beaune!!!"

Joseph Comyns Carr, author, art critic and wit, was never without a joke upon his lips. When he was dying, Sir Squire Bancroft—the most precise and punctilious of men—called with a bunch of black grapes, whereupon Comyns Carr wrote to a friend saying, "Bancroft called to-day and brought me some black grapes—*black*, that's not a very good sign, is it?"

What a void these men who contributed so much to the happiness of the world of yesterday have left behind them! However, one must be thankful to have known them all, and though our evenings may be robbed of many a laugh we must take comfort from the words of Louis de Franchi, for it is certain each of them would say with him, "Weep not for me, dear brother, we shall meet again!"

While Oscar Wilde's remark to the persistent female about her name and her face was a typically deliberate piece of humour in his most puckish vein, Lord Mark Kerr's meeting with Queen Victoria at the last Garden Party given by Her Majesty at Buckingham Palace was funnier, though his reply to this August Personage was obviously not intended to be amusing. As was her custom on these occasions, the Queen made a practice of moving about among her guests during the afternoon, singling out various people for Royal recognition. Lord Mark, who was at this time an extremely vague and eccentric old gentleman, was stopped by the Queen, who said, "I am very glad to see you looking so well, Lord Mark." To which he replied, "Thank you, but you must excuse me; I seem to know your face very well, but I cannot remember your name."

In having recalled the names of a few whose wit meant so much to the many who were fortunate enough to enjoy their friendship, the circumstances which led Charles Dickens to write his immortal Carol can surely not be without interest to the countless thousands who have wept for Tiny Tim, sorrowed with poor Bob Cratchit, and heard the cry "God bless us all, God bless

us every one," fall from the lips of a miserable sinner in the hour of his redemption. The story was told the writer by the late Sir Henry Dickens, nearly half a century ago.

On a bitter night in late December the great novelist, seated in his London house in front of a blazing fire, heard the voices of some carol-singers. Curious to know what sort of folk they were who sang of Good King Wenceslas, he rose, and pulling aside the curtains of his library window was amazed and shocked to see in the street below a small group of ill-clad women and ragged, bare-footed children, walking slowly in the snow, with pinched, anxious, upturned faces.

They were given food and money, and Charles Dickens, with an aching heart, returned once more to the comfort and security that was denied the fellow-creatures he had just helped upon their way. He sat long into the night, and before he went to rest the figures of Marley, iron-bound and chained, Scrooge, hard and sharp as a flint, and the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present and To Come, had taken shape.

That he suffered much as he wrote the Carol is certain, for, as his distinguished son said, his great heart, so brimful with humanity, must have overflowed as he penned the simple lines spoken by Mrs. Cratchit after the "first parting that had come among them." "He was very light to carry," she said, "and his father loved him, so it was no trouble, no trouble."

How infinitely pathetic, too, is the poor woman's struggle to conceal her grief! "The colour hurts my eyes. It makes them weak by candle-light and I wouldn't have your father see my eyes red when he comes home, for all the world."

Who would wager that the ink upon "the Master's" pages was not blurred as Bob, so brave and uncomplaining, broke down when telling of the grave where Tiny Tim was sleeping? "You'll see how green a place it is. You'll see it often. I promised him I would walk there on Sundays. Oh! my little child, my little, little child!!!"

Two thousand times has the writer played the part of Scrooge, and two thousand times have those words left him almost incapable of speech.

In 1899, at the outbreak of the Boer War, a wave of anger

swept the country when there appeared in a French paper one of the vilest caricatures imaginable of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The Queen was shown as a naked old woman in her bath, sitting in a crimson deluge that flowed from the taps, and beneath this unforgivable outrage was written, "I must have one more blood bath before I die." It was many a day before this was forgotten, and though it may seem strange to dwell on a thing which in its proper perspective fades into insignificance when so dreadful a happening as war is to be considered, still it is no small wonder that this grave and unjustifiable insult lingered in the memory of a loyal people long after Boer and Briton had shaken hands.

As to the reason why England took up arms against—so far as the man in the street knew—a peaceful and unwarlike nation, politicians have explained and historians have agreed or disagreed with them. One thing can be said with certainty: never throughout the three years' struggle did the people of England bear any real animosity to the brave Dutchmen who put up such a gallant fight. Indeed, after the first shock, when it became evident that this was not one of Britain's so-called little wars but that Mr. Kruger and his Burghers had every intention of fighting desperately for what they considered their rights, difficult and costly though the conflict became, they raised their hats to the farmers and their magnificent leaders who succeeded, month after month, in making a trained army dance to the tune they called.

Though in no way belittling the prodigious feats of our own men operating in a theatre of war thousands of miles from their base, the marvellous Pimpernel-like adventures of the Boer General De Wet were looked upon with the greatest admiration. A will-o'-the-wisp, he was never anywhere he was supposed to be, and he not only succeeded brilliantly in avoiding capture but continually harassed and confused the troops who were always on his trail. For this reason the sporting instinct of the British nation, which has always been one of its greatest assets, applauded his exploits as if he was one of ourselves. It would be impossible for any man with a heart to read a history of the campaign, or the Life of General Smuts, and not be filled with profound sorrow that these Davids were ever compelled to face a Goliath, but they did so unflinching and unafraid. But forty years have come and gone, and out of evil has come great good, for though, alas, General Botha is no more, in Africa's Field-Marshal a mighty

Empire figure is recognized—one who is loved as a man, admired as a soldier, and applauded as a statesman, to whom Britain in many a dangerous hour has ever been proud to turn for counsel and wise direction.

It may be that the mistakes of the mighty are often stepping-stones to greater things, but never were there more errors of judgment committed before the outbreak of hostilities than in the Boer War. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was intolerant; Lord Salisbury described President Kruger's attitude as that of "an hysterical schoolgirl"; and Sir Redvers Buller, before leaving for the Transvaal to take command of the army in the field, did not hesitate to say that he would be back in England in three months' time to eat his Christmas dinner. The facts were: a three years' war, thirty-three thousand precious lives lost and, incidentally, a huge bill to be footed.

It is true that England, during the two decades prior to 1900, had been engaged in the Zulu, the Afghan and the Egyptian campaigns as major operations, but while these were fought by professional soldiers the Boer War was the first conflict for which the civilian population volunteered, and the City Imperial Volunteers, the C.I.V.s, were cheered to the echo as they strode through London to become partners in a great adventure. The war spirit seized the imagination of everyone. Rudyard Kipling, seeing in the call to arms an opportunity of encouraging mass and class to come to a better understanding, was inspired to write his famous war verses "The Absent Minded Beggar," which were set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

In preparing for war, London in particular seemed to have discovered a new game; flags fluttered, bugles blared, and the holiday spirit of a Cup Final was in the air. Never for a moment was there a question of England being in danger—there was only a sort of vague idea that 7000 miles from the London suburbs a strange old man in an extremely shabby top-hat and ill-fitting frock-coat possessed all the gold in the world and owned enough diamonds to stock every shop in Bond Street from floor to ceiling. This being so, it was decided that Oom Paul, as he was called, must be an extremely obstinate person, who, having learned the meaning of the words Franchise and Progress, decided that he would allow no one to dictate as to how he should deal with the former or handle the latter. This historically may not have been

strictly accurate, but it was the impression the British public gleaned from the newspapers and the speeches of the tub-thumpers.

It encouraged Youth to take a trip to foreign parts without going to the trouble of consulting a steamship office, and the strategists to proceed to the veldt, where they knew they could give their fighting men more exercise than was possible on the comparatively limited space available on Salisbury Plain or in the Long Valley at Aldershot. The sad part of the whole wretched business was that with goodwill and patience it could perfectly well have been avoided. This the writer learned first-hand from Mr. Samuel Marks, of the firm of Lewis & Marks, with whom he travelled from Africa in the spring of 1912. "Sammy," as he was known from the Copper belt to the Cape, was a Jew of extraordinary charm, a millionaire, and a staunch Imperialist. Short and unattractive to look at, with his little scrubby beard, it was impossible for anyone to be in his company for two minutes without realizing that he was talking to a great personality and a most delightful old gentleman. Very direct and far-seeing, he was possessed of a nimble wit, and many of his amusing remarks are still remembered. On one occasion, to a taximan who had driven him a considerable distance he gave a tip of sixpence. The driver, instead of being obliged, said, "Oh! Mr. Marks, only sixpence. Your son always gives me a shilling." "Probably," replied Mr. Marks. "But then, you see, he has a rich father." Once, on hearing a friend complaining of the heat and saying that it was 118 in the shade, his only observation was, "Well then, why stand in the shade?"

Being a man of the greatest integrity, he was persuaded by both General Botha and General Smuts to stand for Parliament, and later he became a Senator. No more humorous rebuke was ever made than the one he administered to a man who envied him his riches. He happened to be walking through a crowded room in the House of Assembly and had reached the door he was making for, when he heard this fellow-member, who thought he was out of earshot, say, "I wish I had Sammy Marks' money." "Do you?" said Marks, turning round quickly. "Would you like his face too?"

Many were the tales Marks had to tell of the pioneers, of his own start and early struggles, of his direct but unfortunately unsuccessful negotiations with the British Government on behalf of

Mr. Kruger, with whom he was on intimate terms. His account of how, on arriving at Cape Town as a penniless lad, he had made his first money was by no means the least interesting story of the many incidents in a wonderfully successful career. Having left the ship which had brought him from England, he stood on the quay wondering what his first move to earn a living should be, when he spied a sailing-vessel unloading a cargo of goat-skins. Having succeeded in getting into conversation with the master, and learning that the 800 skins were for sale at 5d. apiece, he immediately went into a crowded bar on the wharf and offered to sell the whole consignment for 8d. a skin. A deal was concluded on the spot, and this astute boy, later to become a great figure in the land of his adoption, took the profit, which enabled him to start on the road to fame and fortune.

This incident is a digression, and obviously has nothing to do with the concessions demanded of Mr. Kruger, his refusal, and the bringing about of the Boer War, which, as Mr. Marks explained, he considered to be little more than an excuse made by British speculators for laying hands on the golden seams and other treasures which rested almost undisturbed in the richest yielding quartz in the world. This, of course, is open to argument, but knowing the Dutch as well as, or perhaps better than, any living man in Africa, and realizing that they were a proud and stubborn people who felt that they were being unjustly molested, Marks, as has been said, opened negotiations on behalf of his friend the President, who empowered him to approach the British Government with a cut-and-dried proposition by which all outstanding differences could be settled on terms and a conflict averted. However, although Mr. Marks pleaded hard with Mr. Chamberlain, that Minister refused to consider President Kruger's proposals, and an ultimatum was delivered. By the irony of fate it was upon Sammy Marks that the British Government were obliged to call at the end of the war to straighten things out at the Treaty of Vereeniging, when a deadlock occurred.

It was the defence of Mafeking in the Boer War that first brought into prominence that splendid humanitarian, Lord Baden Powell, and it was its relief that gave to our language a new word. When news reached England that success had crowned the efforts of the defenders of this small but important township, London went mad, and so rowdy were the rejoicings and uproarious the

behaviour of many usually staid and proper people that the word "Mafeking" is now used to describe any celebration of a wildly tumultuous kind.

Towards the end of the second year of the war probably the largest sum of money ever raised at a single performance up to that time was obtained by one of the most famous and best-loved actresses of her day, Miss Ellaline Terriss, at a *matinée* organized by her for the benefit of the widows and children of British officers. This concert was given at the Albert Hall, and resulted in her being able to hand £5000 to a most deserving cause. In addition to the many operatic stars who appeared, the massed bands of the British Army, numbering 600 men, performed throughout the afternoon. Nearly 10,000 people paid for admission, and every member of the audience was given a Union Jack as he entered the building. It would be difficult to imagine a more inspiring sight than when the Prince of Wales entered his box and the tremendous orchestra played the National Anthem, the vast throng rising to their feet and singing "God Save the Queen" as they waved their flags. The effect was electric.

At last the campaign, which had dragged on for so many weary months, came to an end, but not before it had left its mark upon the aged Monarch, who was bowed down with grief that the last days of her glorious reign were drawing to a close amidst the sound of battle. Throughout many a trial and tribulation this August Personage had borne up bravely, but she broke down completely when that gallant soldier, Sir Beachcroft Towse, who had lost his eyesight in the battle of Magersfontein, was ushered into her presence. All Her Majesty was able to say was, "Oh! Captain Towse. Oh! Captain Towse." To this that wonderful man, who afterwards devoted his life to help with his example of fortitude many a blinded comrade, answered very simply, "Your Majesty, this is the proudest day of my life."

Forty years have come and gone. Nearly all the principal actors who figured in a drama which brought suffering on many innocent people have journeyed onwards. To-day a country of once potential greatness is now a miracle of achievement. At peace, in the majestic solitude of the mountains of Rhodesia, sleeps Cecil John Rhodes.

To the wits, essayists and artists of his early days, too numerous

to mention, the writer raises his hat respectfully. To discuss their qualities and their values is not his province; this he leaves to the professional destructionists who have for ever created nothing. Still, though even mild criticism of his betters would be a grave impertinence, there is surely no harm in permitting memory to hold the door ajar that a glimpse may be caught of those at whom he gazed in wonderment when he was a young man. What outstanding figures there were in the Nineties, and how many men of potential greatness who loomed large on the horizon of art in all its branches! In this period the mood and manner of established giants often changed. In the world of the theatre this was particularly noticeable in the case of Sir Arthur Pinero, for his comedies pure and simple and his farces were shelved, and Mrs. Tanqueray told her tragic tale, which encouraged not only the contemporaries of our greatest Victorian dramatist to enter a new school but urged him to use his craftsmanship on subjects such as "The Profligate," "Iris," "The Gay Lord Quex" and the like, which, prior to Mrs. Patrick Campbell's triumph, had not fallen from his brilliant pen.

Oscar Wilde's best books were written at this time, and he delighted London as a playwright with the epigrammatic dialogue and unorthodox technique. The name of Somerset Maugham, so soon to become a very great power in the theatre, was now heard, and Sir James Barrie, having waved good-bye to "My Lady Nicotine" and closed the "Window in Thrums" for ever, commenced the writing of a long chain of phenomenal play successes.

It is only natural that the celebrated people of the Vintage Years which the author had the great good fortune to meet should have left an indelible impression on his mind as personalities, quite divorced from their achievements, for they included among many others George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, George Moore, Conan Doyle, Richard Le Gallienne, Stephen Phillips, Israel Zangwill, Orpen, Millais and Leighton. To mention only these few wonderful people is proof, if proof were needed, how deeply the Forties are in debt to the Nineties, and it must be remembered that these names are but a tenth of a list which could be compiled with the greatest possible ease. Thinking at random, without notes or memoranda, in literature there were George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Anthony Hope, Hall Caine, Jerome K. Jerome, Maurice Baring, Joseph Conrad, A. E. W. Mason, George Gissing, W. H. T. Crossland, and Max Beerbohm; in

sculpture, Alfred Gilbert; and among the artists, C. H. Shannon, Walter Sickert, James Pryde, William Nicholson, Aubrey Beardsley, Phil May, Max Beerbohm, Dudley Hardy, and many more who could be added to this marvellous gallery by the student or the critic.

No doubt because Aubrey Beardsley and Max Beerbohm were of the same age as this humble chronicler, he watched their rise to fame with unbounded interest and admiration. Aubrey Beardsley gave much to the pictorial art of the Nineties, for in deciding to mould form and figure on the Japanese school he brought a gaiety and an uplift to the Black and White of his period, which till this time had possessed little of the decorative springlike qualities in which his impish pencil so greatly delighted.

To Sir Max Beerbohm, apart from his literary genius, how beholden are the caricaturists who followed! It was he who taught them what real fun meant *in* and *beneath* a subject. Had this great and subtle humorist not taught the world the meaning of the verb "to mock," the comic draughtsmen of to-day might still be giving us nothing more exciting than "a harmless, genteel pleasantness." The more solidly constructed the windmills of tradition the more eagerly did Max tilt at them, sparing neither men nor all they stood for. He not only wrote epigrams, he drew them.

It is probably true that "success is like the sunshine—it brings out all the adders," but whether this be so or not, it is very certain that the warmth of an English Sunday brings out all the cyclists. How few motorists are there to-day who, passing hundreds of members of Cyclists' Clubs and watching them with good-humoured tolerance as they toil and sweat, realize that only fifty years ago their own mothers and grandmothers were as cycle-minded as to-day are the happy clerks and pretty typists ("pretty" so long as their proportions are not displayed in two-and-sixpenny shorts which are often dangerous and always embarrassing). Nothing pleased Mayfair and Belgravia in the early Nineties more than to make up parties to ride on silver-plated wire wheels towards the villages which are the lungs of London.

In the Eighties the penny-farthing bicycle had fallen into disuse when an astounding new invention reared its head, this

being a *solid indiarubber tyre*! The penny-farthing was a gigantic wheel with one a sixth of its size at the back, so called because the big wheel and the small wheel looked, in comparison to each other, exactly like a penny and a farthing. They were grotesque affairs and, it being almost impossible to mount without assistance, ordinary folk preferred to look *at* them rather than to perform *on* them.

In the Nineties, however, a new form of bicycle came on the market. Both wheels were of equal size, and to the pedals was attached a chain-gearred gadget for the first time in history. Apparently the last word in bicycle production had been spoken, when, to the astonishment of the public, a gentleman by the name of Dunlop produced a tyre that was to revolutionize the industry. It was a hollow rubber affair covering an inner canvas tube which, when inflated with a hand-pump, became a circular cushion. On its first appearance it was looked upon as a freak and caused much amusement, but to everyone's astonishment it was found not only to do away with the direct shocks riders experienced on poor roads but, being extremely resilient, it increased racing speeds on the tracks by a hundred per cent. The pneumatic tyre which is in use to-day on all kinds of vehicles is the grandchild of Mr. Dunlop's brain.

It is amusing to look back and remember that in the summer of 1904 the Parks were filled with the most distinguished men and women all dressed up for the new sport of "Cycling," the men wearing hard, shallow straw hats called boaters, stocks and white gloves, while their fair companions in dainty blouses and tweed skirts looked bewitching. Without giving away any secrets, the more daring of these ladies were bold enough to affect slightly divided skirts; the baggy knickers which they wore later and which made the non-bicycling women of England throw up their hands in horror were yet to come.

This cycling craze of the Smart Set, however, lasted only for a couple of seasons, as the machines very soon, becoming less expensive, were within the reach of the ordinary man and woman in the street, and Society, ever class-conscious, decided to turn its eyes towards a new strange horseless carriage called an automobile, which was propelled either by steam, electricity, or a new spirit called petrol.

Although the Nineties boasted no motor-cars, and Sunday

excursions were therefore more difficult to arrange—the number of places to be visited being extremely limited—the fact that no noisy crowds were to be met with on arrival made it possible to enjoy in peace and quiet the charm of the few accessible spots which to-day are almost fair-grounds.

Brighton was the most popular and fashionable town to visit, and was known as “London by the Sea”—a title that was hers by right, as the luxury-living were practically the only visitors who came down for the week-end or took one of the few Sunday morning trains to spend the day there. This Queen of Watering Places, as she was also called, was certainly a playground of the élite, who would have no more thought of appearing on the sea-front in clothes other than the ones they wore in the Park during the height of the season than of trying to jump over the moon. Indeed, a large number of Society people had houses in Brighton which they kept open for several months in the year.

It may be remembered that, unfortunately, not so very long ago there were several murders committed in the town, and a humorous scribe in writing about them spoke of this happy and health-giving spot as the “Queen of Slaughtering Places.”

It seems impossible to think of Brighton without Sir Harry Preston—for that wonderful and dear little man for some forty years *was* Brighton—but at the time of which we write he managed the Grand Hotel, Bournemouth. The Old Ship Hotel was “Journey’s End” for the coaches, and the meeting-place of Queens of Bohemia—and their admirers.

Up a side street off the promenade was perhaps the most celebrated oyster-shop in all England. It was kept by three old maiden ladies by the name of Cheeseman, who ruled their customers with a pleasant rod of iron. In their establishment smoking was strictly prohibited, and had a reigning monarch—and there were several knocking about Europe in the Nineties—entered with a lighted cigarette, this Dickensesque trio would have called out in chorus, “Put that out.” Oysters then were only half a crown a dozen, but those three autocrats considered that expensive, for they remembered the time when their father, who was a tailor in the town in the Fifties, sold Whitstable Natives at sixpence a dozen. Had these delicious old spinsters been given a shilling for every celebrity they had served during half a century they would certainly have been able to retire millionairesses. They had no drink licence

and never applied for one, being content to send for tankards of stout from a neighbouring public-house. If ever there was an Institution, the House of Cheeseman certainly was one.

No stranger who visited Brighton and drove along the parade ever did so without Mrs. O'Shea's house being shown him by the cabman. The window on the second floor was pointed out as the one through which that great Irishman Charles Stewart Parnell climbed when at night-time he visited the lady who brought to him so much happiness and, alas, such tragedy. Mr. Reuben Sassoon's residence was also a landmark, for as an intimate friend of the Prince of Wales he had often entertained him there. It was said, though probably quite untruly, that Mr. Sassoon had an Egyptian servant by the name of Hassan, who was invariably sent for after dinner if there were guests and instructed to tell the gentlemen the story of how his father was eaten by a sheep. There was also a legend that when this wealthy man went to the theatre at Brighton he always took two boxes, in one of which Hassan sat alone. During the performance, it is chronicled, Mr. Sassoon never looked at the actors but watched Hassan, and if that worthy seemed pleased he would say, "The play is good, Hassan laughs." Few will believe this—but may one hope that some will be amused.

To spend Sunday on the River Thames was a thing Mayfair and all the theatrical celebrities of the hour revelled in. The eleven o'clock train from Paddington for Maidenhead was always crowded with lovely women, dressed to perfection, accompanied by the Lads of the Village, who looked, in their well-creased flannels and straw boaters usually adorned with 'Varsity or Leander ribbons, the last word from Savile Row. In those happy days of cushioned punts and silent backwaters, both of them designed by Cupid and therefore eminently suited for the adventures he so unblushingly encouraged, idle hours sped by unnoticed, while on many a launch servants were to be seen laying elaborate luncheons for those who preferred the gay music of champagne corks in the sunlight to the whispered popping of the question beneath the shadows of the secret willow. Towards evening the distant church bells called man and maid to Skindles, and, dinner over, London summoned her children home, some of them to bed.

To those who drove their own horses or hired a carriage and pair, Richmond beckoned. Here the Star and Garter welcomed saints and sinners beneath the fairy lights that made its balconies

an enchanted palace. Oh for those happy days of country air and caviare, and the song of the nightingale whose melody is scored by nature to loosen the tongues of inexperienced lovers before the liqueurs are served! It would be selfish to wish that distant places were once again the exclusive property of a pleasure-seeking minority, and perhaps it isn't fair to feel that the lordly salmon has the right to look down on fish and chips, Burgundy on ginger-beer, or hot-house peaches on a poor relation from the tin, but yet how much more pleasant life would be if bananas had no skins.

To the youthful motorist of to-day it must seem almost unbelievable that in 1904 or thereabouts the newly invented automobiles of the then pioneers were, compared with the perfect cars they drive so easily, rather inferior puffing-billies. It is true, they were of all makes and shapes, but as to their excellence it was not a question which sort was *better* than the other, but which one was *worse*.

To begin with, on preparing for a day's motoring the first question asked was, "When is our car *liable to start*?" When the vehicle had been bullied into setting off at the breakneck speed of ten miles an hour, the next important question was how far it would go without stopping. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that no part of these new marvels was perfect or to be relied upon. The water in the engine-coolers, for instance, generally boiled over very early in the proceedings, and the engines themselves, spluttering and grunting along a road as level as a billiard-table, not only cried out in agony on being asked to negotiate the most ordinary incline but more often than not stopped dead. As for a hill of any kind, it usually meant that everyone had to get out and push. To suppose for a moment that a long journey could be undertaken without having to pull up a dozen times, one would have had to be as great an optimist as the cat who sat on a church steeple waiting for a lark. Every mile of every road was littered with cars beneath which worried-looking gentlemen were lying on their backs with spanners and hammers, or the passengers were to be seen standing arguing with each other as to why the engine would insist on doing everything but function.

To add to all the delightful uncertainty of motoring in these early days, it must be realized that Macadamized or treated roads were quite unknown, so that, as a rule, if a lady started off as an ultra-platinum blonde, the clouds of dust and dirt to be encountered

transformed her into a dashing brunette by the time she reached her destination. To endeavour to avoid this unnatural change in their appearance women were obliged to wear over their hats thick gauze veils tied tightly under their chins, while, as an additional adornment, large goggles were indispensable as protection for the eyes. Men, too, wore not only these blinker-like affairs which destroyed all hope of their looking sweet nothings at their charming companions, but were obliged to sport large caps with flaps which buttoned securely round their necks. Notwithstanding all these precautions, however, a large quantity of Middlesex was always blended with the earth of Surrey and Sussex before Brighton was at last reached after many a struggle. It must be realized that in these days there were no such things as closed cars, and that it was some considerable time before even canvas hoods, let alone carriage-work, were introduced.

The daring of the drivers who dashed headlong through the countryside at fifteen miles an hour caused the pedestrians who watched them, and who also got smothered with dust, to gape in astonishment; and so dangerous did the pace seem even in the ten miles an hour days, that the writer well remembers seeing a motor-car pass through the village of Merstham, where he lived, preceded by a man waving a red flag.

The reply of a young officer on leave in 1916 when asked by his mother, "What it was like at the Front?" was, "Oh! the noise *and* the people"; this can be paraphrased if the question is asked, "What were the tyres like?" by murmuring, "Oh! the covers *and* the inner tubes!", for they were both as vulnerable as the heart of an unmarried lady of uncertain years who vowed that she had no intention of going to her grave wondering.

Repair outfits of patches and liquid gutta-percha were carried by everyone, for punctures were as constant as the affection of a good wife, and meant a solid hour by the roadside hoping for the best and fearing the worst.

However absurd all this may sound to the Racing Kings of Brooklands, they should do anything but scoff at the Nineties. On the contrary, it is their duty to praise them whole-heartedly, for they were struggling bravely to give the coming century the benefit of hard-fought-for and dearly won victory.

Those lucky people who to-day are able to step into superlative car luxury and step out again some hours later as fresh as when

they started on their trip, must shudder at the thought of dusty roads. Still, before Queen Victoria's highways were invaded and conquered by asphalt or kindred preparations for the benefit of motorists, they were nature's frames for her pictures of golden corn or restful pastureland. Few were alike; they varied in colour from the red earth of Devon to the paler shades of the Midlands, and from the steel-grey of the Flintlands to the rich chocolate loam that bordered the lighter soils on which the poor man's bird thrives so well, while elsewhere their many pastel shades were as much part of Constable's country as the pleasant fields themselves.

Given a choice, we would not perhaps wish them with us again, though when they ceased to be there ended, it must be confessed, the sanctuary of many a peaceful hamlet where once the wayfarer paused to rest a while and conjure up in his mind's eye those days when curfew fell upon the ear of tonsured monk and genial Brother who, mindful of the coming Friday, lingered beside the Abbey's well-stocked streams. Now, charabancs empty their contents into these restful havens where for centuries simple folk have trod the cobblestones at dawn upon their way to work, and on their return at dusk have bidden good-night to kindly neighbours looking through diamond panes.

To these sweet "Sleepy Hollows" so full of sanity and good sound sense Macadam has brought the garish embroidery of a Cheap Age. The fingers of the Village Fiddler now are cramped and cold, his violin, which set love alight within the eyes of merry Morris Dancers, lies silent, and in its place mouth-organ and accordion, gramophone and radio disturb the long last sleep of those who lie within the confines of an ancient house. The Herbalist who ministered so well for all, Mine Host who filled his pewter to the brim, the Blacksmith with his anvil and his forge, the Yeoman with his folk-song, all, all have vanished, and in their place at every corner attention is directed to the latest cigarette and patent medicine, synthetic beer and the flashy mass-production of curious foods and cheap suits. Profits from these modern syndicated wares enable their proprietors to become every other inch gentlemen, and provide the wherewithal to send their wives to the masseur, their sons to public schools, and their daughters to buy feathers and white satin for the Courts.

Truly, Mr. Macadam, in providing us with many a necessity you have stolen much.

But let it be remembered that it is not alone the Happy Wayfarer who has been robbed by a merchandized age of peaceful backwaters, where delightful surprises awaited him in unexpected and seldom-discovered places. The simple folk, so long content to look upon the land on which from time immemorial their forefathers had built their dwellings, felt for the first time the iron hand of change fall heavy on their shoulders.

Their village greens, once so secure from prying eyes and jealously guarded as were the bastions of beleaguered cities, were forced to capitulate to the wheeled barbarians of the now near-by, but once far-off, industrial centres. Their welcome twice-yearly guest, the travelling circus, trekked with those twin partners the Gypsy and Romance into the unknown. Their players, the most ancient in the world, cruel Mr. Punch and patient Judy, squeaked no more, and good dog Toby, the only human of a classic company, barked no longer for the delight of little Englishmen and tiny Englishwomen. Sophistication stalked abroad amidst their winding ways, scattering news-sheets early and late, bringing often unwanted tidings which for so long had only fallen from the pedlar's lips or maybe from sons who, having for some brief space ventured far afield, returned eager for rest and the lamplit corners of happy homesteads. Strangers arrived who hushed the merry laughter and applause it was the custom to bestow upon doughty Mr. Jones the butcher for the carrying of his bat for Twenty after defying the cunning underhands of Mr. Brown the saddler. Unmown grass covered with untidy litter now marks the old cricket-pitch, and everywhere is the careless legacy of picnic-makers.

Speed, oh, speed! While in bewilderment we doff our hats to you, let it be added that anxious thoughts are blended with our approbation, for we are conscious that many a time the modern has paid twenty-one good shillings for his pound note.

However, those who knew well the glories of the land before the scent of petrol tainted our Island air have little cause to grumble. The exchange of horse-drawn vehicles for motor-cars is a thing for which even the greatest sentimentalist must be thankful—for now that England is independent of trains and time-tables, difficult cross-country journeys have been made by no means the tedious excursions they used to be in the days when Bradshaw reigned supreme.

Alas the then newly invented motor-engine originally designed

as a contribution towards man's comfort, has been converted into a machine for warlike purposes—though the "Tank" as a deadly weapon of offence, compared with the development of an innocent-looking novelty called a "flying machine," is only a very minor part of the armoury used on the crimson playground of the criminal and the lunatic. When this marvel, which has made human beings masters of the air, appeared for the first time, it was acclaimed by the world and hugged to its breast with a joy as great as is the ecstasy of the mother for her new-born child. It may be wondered if an unthinking multitude would have cheered itself hoarse had it realized that soaring overhead was a thing destined to become the most evil instrument ever conceived by the mind of man.

In the years so near the Nineties that it makes no matter there stood upon the cliffs of France a quiet-looking man by the name of Blériot, and beside him was a frail machine of canvas-covered wooden struts. Turning to a small group of onlookers, fearful for their countryman going, as they thought, to destruction, he asked very simply, "Which way is Dover?" The toy took off, the Channel was negotiated, and Blériot came to safety upon British soil within only a few yards of the water he had succeeded in crossing.

The whole history of flying is written in the French airman's four words and the first six other ones spoken ten years afterwards by Alcock and Brown to the journalists who pressed them for details of their historic flight on arrival over here from the United States. They were: "*When we left America last night.*" There is nothing to add to that opening sentence. It was seemingly only the recording of a triumph. In reality it was, "Death taking a holiday, prior to drenching the world with tears."

The present-day public have to thank the Nineties for the inauguration of the Dining-Car. This form of catering was originated and perfected by Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Towle, who, starting life as a little boy on the bottom rung of the ladder at Derby Station, lived to be acknowledged the greatest figure in his particular branch of the railway industry. On his retirement he was succeeded by his two sons, Sir Francis and Mr. Arthur Towle. This famous family will long be remembered for having transformed a vast number of hotels once celebrated for their flights of stairs, their thousands of moths, their dust, their open

grates and Victorian hip-baths, to say nothing of waiters as ancient as the decorations—for having transformed them into houses which for luxury rival any in the world.

While the face of London has, of course, greatly changed in the last fifty years through the pulling down of individual buildings and substituting for low elevations palatial premises, the drastic clearing of areas for entire reconstruction has been comparatively negligible, with the exception of the land East of the Strand, which has undergone a complete transformation.

Taking a line from where the now dismantled Lyceum Theatre stands, entire streets were ruthlessly swept away and in their place arose Aldwych.

From the Church of St. Clement Danes to Holborn, and from where once stood the Old Gaiety Theatre towards Temple Bar, an entirely new district was planned and built, one of which all good Londoners are justly proud.

Nevertheless, it would be idle to suppose that at this time of change the Nineties did not shed a silent tear as century-old landmarks disappeared and the haunts of many a well-known character vanished overnight. The theatres which vanished in the great upheaval were the Olympic, built on the site of the same-named house that Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews made their home; the Old Gaiety, where that famous quartette, Edward Terry and Edward Royce, Nellie Farren and Kate Vaughan, lit a sacred lamp; the Strand and Opéra Comique, renowned for their farces, their actors, their music and their song; and the Globe, so dear to playgoers of the Nineties, for on its stage "The Private Secretary" had lived and "Charley's Aunt" was born.

Difficult to visualize all this, no doubt, and being so, perhaps it may be well to scan a map which shows exactly where some of these places stood.

Though theatrical history is not the purpose of this book, it may not be thought inappropriate to speak of some of the outstanding players of the Nineties, for the British Theatre at this period was in every way remarkable.

It is true that the Bancrofts had retired and the Kendals were nearing the end of their career (though Mrs. Kendal, the very greatest of actresses, was still giving of her best), but Henry Irving



London Theatre Land in 1900

was in his prime, and with the magic of his partner, the divine Ellen Terry, held London in his hand, as he alone was able to do; with the most perfect productions of the Eighties—or any other time for the matter of that—he had entirely revolutionized the stage and the actor's calling. Sir John Hare was delighting London. England's never-since-equalled light comedians, Sir Charles Wyndham and Sir Charles Hawtrey, stood alone, and as low comedians Fred Leslie and Arthur Roberts were so far greater than the majority of those who followed them that comparison would be idle.

It was then, too, that Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson as Buckingham—and later as Hamlet—proved himself beyond words a master of masters; and handsome William Terriss at the Adelphi was the greatest idol of the public that melodrama had ever known. At the Princess Theatre in Oxford Street Wilson Barrett, a stilted though deservedly popular favourite in such pieces as "The Silver King," "Claudian" and the "Sign of the Cross," drew all London, while soon that supremely fine actor Sir John Martin Harvey was to electrify the town as Sydney Carton in "The Only Way" at the Lyceum.

It was in these days that the star of Mrs. Patrick Campbell rose in the theatrical firmament, and in the light opera and musical comedy houses Miss Evie Greene, Miss Letty Lind, Miss Ellaline Terriss and Dame Marie Tempest reigned unchallenged queens.

These were the halcyon days of the Haymarket Theatre under the management of Sir Herbert Tree, and at the St. James's Sir George Alexander was a perfect producer of modern comedy and society drama, while at the Court Theatre in Sloane Square the Vedrenne and Barker management made history.

When Mr. Granville Barker, at the zenith of a brilliant career, went into retirement at an age when most men are thankful that they have at last been given a chance to climb the ladder, the theatre lost a producer of delicate fancy and sensitive understanding, whose art to-day would have been a beacon towards which many of the present generation would have been well advised to steer. In direct contrast was his partner Mr. Vedrenne, who was a most astute business man. In drawing up the many contracts he made with established artists, to show how absolutely fair and above-board he intended to be he more often than not opened his negotiations by saying, "Now, look here, I intend to put all my cards on the table." This declaration was so well known that it became

somewhat of a joke, and called forth a really funny remark from Dame Marie Tempest, who, dining one night at the Savoy Grill Room, saw Vedrenne looking about anxiously in the overcrowded restaurant. It was obvious that there was no hope of his being able to order a meal, and on someone saying, "What is Vedrenne doing, coming here so late?" the inimitable comedienne answered, "I expect he's looking for a table to put his cards on."

How many more outstanding men and women of the theatre might be added to the list if this were a book devoted solely to the play.

While purposely having refrained from going into any lengthy analytical description of the quality of the great artists mentioned, for should one embark on so fascinating a study an entire volume would be necessary if justice were done to so many giants, references to Sir Charles Hawtrey and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as delightful though somewhat erratic individuals may not be considered out of place. Like his famous predecessor Charles Mathews, Hawtrey's charm was irresistible, for a more light-hearted, inconsequent and generous spendthrift never lived. Off the stage he was the most unactory of actors, and if one had not known him to be the outstanding artist he was, a stranger would probably have taken him to be a *bon-viveur*, a man who occasionally might have wandered into the stalls of a theatre where the best plays, and only the best, were being given. His whole make-up was that of a man of leisure, fond of gambling and racing, witty and casual. He was very popular with men, and much beloved by women. He made several large fortunes as a manager and was paid enormous salaries as an actor, but notwithstanding all that, he was always in financial difficulties. Two, if not three times he became a bankrupt, and on the last occasion, when asked by the Official Receiver what was the beginning of his financial year, he replied with a smile that would have wheedled a bird off a tree-top, "Oh, my dear fellow, every damn day."

Typical of the way in which money melted in his hands, he once arrived in New York on a Thursday, immediately drew fifteen thousand dollars from the management at whose theatre he was going to play, went to the races on the Friday and Saturday and played the horses, as they say in America, to find that on the Sunday morning he was without a cent.

Late in life he married a brilliant lady in the person of the

Hon. Mrs. Peters, and it was owing to her sound advice that he steered clear of innumerable messes into which otherwise he certainly would have floundered. Up or down, he was always gay and apparently without a care in the world—as indeed was the lady of his choice, who had many witty things to her credit. It was while in a nursing home after a severe operation that on the matron knocking at her door she called out, “Come in! Friend or enemy?”

As much as Charles Hawtrey was loved, Mrs. Patrick Campbell was admired and feared, for her wit had the Brookfieldian touch that qualified them both for prizes in the gentle art of making enemies. When asked one morning at rehearsal what she thought of a sister actress she answered, “Oh, admirable. If she only had a few more brains, she’d be half-witted!!” And when told that a rival was suffering from housemaid’s knee she commented, “Really, I always thought she had two.” She was never at a loss for a reply. Once when acting with Sir George Alexander, with whom she did not get on at all well, she received a message from him asking her not to laugh at him on the stage. She told his secretary to assure Sir George that she never laughed at him on the stage, but always waited till she got home. Though these little pleasantries in themselves were extremely amusing, they were hardly calculated to endear her to the people on whom she pinned them. Towards the end of her life she fell on extremely hard times and was compelled to go to Hollywood, of which, had she written a book, its title would undoubtedly have been “Who’s Not.” In one of her obituary notices a journalist concluded by saying, “Poor Mrs. Pat was her own enemy; she went down like a sinking frigate, firing broadsides at all the people who were hastening to her rescue!!!”

This most attractive and wayward creature made her first appearance in the West End in “The Trumpet Call,” a melodrama at the Adelphi Theatre. On the first night an incident occurred which might well have ruined the play. Towards the end of the second act, during a long speech which gave Mrs. Campbell her first big acting chance, her skirt became unfastened and gradually slipped down below her knees on to the floor, leaving her standing in the centre of the stage in her underclothes. The pit and gallery not unnaturally began to titter, but, entirely ignoring the desperately embarrassing situation in which she found herself, she continued

as if nothing had happened, and by the intensity and passion of her performance she not only silenced the audience but carried the situation in the drama to a triumphant conclusion and received an ovation seldom heard in a London theatre.

But while Mrs. Campbell spared no one, shooting her barbed arrows as indiscriminately as the Cockney sportsman who delights in browning a covey of driven partridges, she had in Lady Tree a rival with whom, it may be imagined, she would have thought twice before seeking mortal combat of a verbal kind. For Maud Tree was a brilliant conversationalist, and in her day every bit as witty as Mrs. Campbell. Her sallies, however, though pointed, were not designed to give lasting offence, and she delivered them with such an I'm-sure-you-know-I-don't-mean-it air that her victims were convinced that her attacks were merely happy random shots that would have applied equally well to someone else had they themselves not been with her. Lunching one day with the writer, he said—and meant it because he was very fond of her—“Oh, dear Lady Tree, it is wonderful to be with you again; I haven't seen you for a whole year.” To which she replied, “How good of you!!!” Needless to say, this remark earned an extremely large bunch of Parma violets. At a dinner given to her husband during the run of “Caesar” at His Majesty's Theatre, she found herself seated next a nervous gentleman whose name was down to propose the health of her distinguished partner. He explained to her, in answer to an enquiry as to why he was eating nothing, that he was very worried because he didn't know what sort of speech to make. “Oh!” said Lady Tree, “there is nothing to be alarmed about, I am sure Herbert will love anything you think of. In fact, if I were you I should simply just get up and say, ‘We've come to bury Caesar, not to praise him,’ and sit down.” Her self-possession on the most trying occasions was remarkable, whether in the theatre or out of it, as is shown by the following incident. When driving one day in a pair-horse brougham down Sloane Street, where she lived, the animals took fright, and when they turned the corner bolted as hard as they could go up Knightsbridge. All she did was to lean out of the window and say to her coachman, “This is a little trying, Tom; may I suggest that you drive into something cheap?”

In the Nineties Sir Hall Caine was the best of best-sellers, as well he deserved to be, but somehow the plots of his novels, which

had a great popular appeal, seeming to Lady Tree to be more for the masses than the classes, she decided that it would be well to write to him and suggest that as he was such a success he should alter his name to Servants' Hall Caine. Had this been repeated to that very kindly personality he would, no doubt, have been extremely hurt; on the other hand, if she had said it to him herself in her own smiling, ingenuous way, it is certain that he would have laughed at what she would have made him feel was a subtle compliment.

An extraordinary sense of humour walked hand-in-hand with her wit, and seeing through most people, she accepted many an evasive answer to direct questions with a gay philosophy. Her advice to all wives who were slightly anxious as to the fidelity of their husbands was, "If you get an unexpected present of no particular value from your spouse do not be unduly suspicious; if, however, he buys you a very expensive one you may be sure it is an Alibi-buy."

In a train one day she made a most amusing remark to a friend about a very stout lady who, getting into the same compartment with a Chow, took the dog on her lap and gave it a bun. "Look at her," Lady Tree whispered; "isn't that an extremely clever way of advertising the play at Herbert's beautiful theatre? I wonder who thought of it?" "How do you mean?" asked her companion. "Why, look," Her Ladyship replied; "the Bun, the Fat, and the Dog—Chew! Chin!! Chow!!!"

Amongst other things, the message she sent to a very difficult lady of her own age who came to the Haymarket to co-star with her in a new production, though slightly cruel, was a well-deserved rap over the knuckles. The stage manager brought her the unwelcome news that the newcomer insisted on having the best dressing-room in the theatre, this being the one that Lady Tree always occupied. "What am I to do?" he said. "Do? Why, give it to her, of course, and be sure to say that I feel it is hers by right, for I remember quite well that she always had it when I was at school and was brought here by my nurse to see her act."

Ellen Terry's performance as Ophelia was held by the best judges of acting to have been the most outstandingly beautiful performance of the part within their memory, so also it can be said without fear of contradiction that Lady Tree's portrayal of Polonius's daughter was a masterpiece of pathetic tragedy acting.

At the end of the Eighties the stage lost a popular young actor in the person of a Mr. Bernard Gould. There are few to-day who will remember his work ; but, as Sir Bernard Partridge, his countrymen are grateful to him for his noble treatment of many a vital subject, which in times of anxiety have given heart to his contemporaries, and to those who follow—we pray in the happier years to come—history in Black and White.

The authors who served Dame Thespis in the Vintage Years and were writing at the top of their form were Sir William Gilbert, Sir Arthur Pinero, Oscar Wilde, Claude Carton, Sydney Grundy, Haddon Chambers, Henry Arthur Jones, G. R. Sims, Henry Pettitt, Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton. Sir James Barrie's first play, "Walker, London," was first produced in 1892, and Mr. Bernard Shaw at this date was the dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review*, with the majority of his masterpieces yet to come.

London was lucky in that at this time Sarah Bernhardt, Elconora Duse, Réjane, Jane Harding and Coquelin, all at the zenith of their powers, were appearing regularly for short seasons in the Metropolis, and the great Italian tragedian Salvini, a mighty actor, appeared as Othello and the Gladiator at Drury Lane. There is little doubt that his performance of the Moor of Venice has never been, or ever will be, equalled. It was terrifying.

Grasso, a Sicilian tragedian, visited London a little later, and, though a second-rate actor, drew large audiences for a time at the Lyric Theatre, who went to see him more out of curiosity than to admire his work. His passion was so dynamic that he would have torn corrugated iron to tatters had the play demanded it, and his repose had all the restless energy of a tigress defending her young.

During his stay representative British actors gave him a banquet at the Green Room Club. He was overwhelmed by the honour paid him, and made enthusiastic speeches of thanks through an interpreter after every course, eulogizing England and her artists, her army, her navy, her flowers, fruit and fogs, and even her tourists (Heaven forgive him), whom he said he had often admired at Palermo. The interpreter—a mild little man—rose after each oration and said, "He saya he atanka you very mooch." As the dinner wore on this worthy became more than slightly tipsy, and cut down his translation to a hiccup and five words, "He saya same as before."

On leaving the club in the early hours of the morning, Grasso embraced every actor within kissing distance as he bid them a loving Continental farewell. It appears that he lived in some rather squalid rooms over a little Italian restaurant in Soho, and not wishing to let anyone know that he was not staying at a fashionable hotel, he called out loudly to the cabman, "Driva mea to the Lyrica Theatre." "Good heavens!" said one of the men who were seeing him off. "What on earth is he driving to the Lyric Theatre for at three in the morning?" To which someone replied, "He's forgotten to kiss the fireman!!"

In having mentioned that the Globe Theatre had been the home of "Charley's Aunt," let it be added that it would be impossible to imagine any greater play romance than the circumstances connected with the production of that world-wide farcical success. It was originally written by Mr. Brandon Thomas as a semi-serious piece, the part made famous by Mr. W. S. Penley being in the original version by no means the all-important rôle it ultimately became.

The play was first produced in the English provinces, where it attracted poor houses, and might possibly have been shelved for ever had its author not entirely reconstructed the story on purely farcical lines as a vehicle for Mr. Penley. Notwithstanding the drastic alterations which had been made, the question of how to finance a London production after its initial failure became an obstacle very difficult to surmount. However, by the greatest good fortune a fairy godmother appeared, in the shape of a lady who was willing to invest five hundred pounds in a theatrical enterprise. With this sum it became possible to ring up the curtain on what turned out to be one of the greatest successes in the history of the theatre. Everyone concerned in the venture made a fortune. The brave lady became wealthier by forty thousand pounds, and riches beyond their wildest dreams poured into the laps of both Mr. Thomas and Mr. Penley.

While in no way belittling the excellence of the author's work, it would be idle to deny that the remarkable performance given by a great comic personality was in a large measure responsible for the phenomenal success of "Charley's Aunt." W. S. Penley was that rarest of all birds, a funny low comedian. As a rule, when an actor is described as a low comedian he is accepted as being an uproariously funny fellow, but this is a most erroneous

conclusion to arrive at. Many of them, it is true, are low, but few are really comic. W. S. Penley, however, can be written down as an artist who was born to make the world rock with laughter, even in his most serious moments.

On the first night of a new production in the Nineties many extraordinary scenes were witnessed. It is no uncommon thing to-day to hear hostile demonstrations if a play has failed to please, but these signs of disapproval compared with what occurred at a failure years ago are as the cooing of doves or the sound of a summer wind whispering sweet nothings to Corot's silver birches.

From 1895 till about 1908 the pit and gallery, having paid their shillings and their sixpences, considered that not only were they entitled to pass sentence of death upon the managers, the actors and the authors, but they had the right to see the rope placed round their necks. Often the pit shouted and the gallery yelled like wild beasts, for these were also the days of organized opposition when rival managements—especially in the musical-comedy world—sent paid wreckers to deliberately howl down applause at the end of a play and even to create a disturbance before the curtain rose. At times a running commentary was kept up during the entire action of a piece, and so out-of-hand and impossible did this situation ultimately become that to protect themselves many managers were compelled to engage professional pugilists to deal with the hostile gangs. This at last had the desired effect, as many of the obstructionists were so savagely handled that they were loath to earn money at the price they had to pay.

Out of bad, however, came good, for owing to all this confusion the Gallery First Nighters Club came into being. Its members were composed of really enthusiastic playgoers who, understanding a great deal about the art of acting, and sympathizing with the difficulties and anxieties of a first performance, were fair and just in their criticism, and being so, became a body to whom the authors and players were, and still are, extremely grateful.

It is seldom that a play fails disastrously unless it is really bad, and it must be supposed that any pieces which ran only one night, or perhaps two, could not have been epoch-making works. This must have been the case with a play called "The County," which opened at the Garrick Theatre and finished its run when the curtain fell on the first performance.

Another, by Henry Arthur Jones, called "The Crusaders,"

lasted only about two or three nights at the old Avenue Theatre, now the Playhouse, notwithstanding that it was performed by a superlatively good cast.

While these pieces held a record in this period for some time, their proud positions were eclipsed by a three-act sporting comedy produced in the provinces, of which only an act and a half was given. The first scene took place in a baronial hall, at which a hunt breakfast was in full swing. The management of the theatre, being unusually generous, provided real champagne, and some of the actors, being unaccustomed to drink this stimulating beverage, indulged in it so freely that they became completely fuddled, so that when the second act commenced they were so incoherent that the curtain had to be rung down. However, so far as such mishaps are concerned, New York competed successfully in this direction. A play produced there called "The Spy" ran only two nights. Mention is made of this production because of an amusing incident connected with its second and last presentation, when it was performed to an almost empty house. The first act ended with the dramatic escape from justice of one of the principal characters, the line which brought the curtain down being, "Mount your horses. One thousand dollars for the spy—dead or alive." The manager, who was standing in the wings and must decidedly have been a bit of a humorist, capped the situation by stepping on to the stage and saying to the audience, "Yes, one thousand dollars for the Spy, and anyone can have the manuscript and band parts for the money."

These were the days when theatrical criticism was by no means of the kid-glove variety. Space in the daily papers not being so precious as it is to-day, or entertainment so varied, authors and actors if attacked were flayed unmercifully at considerable length, and those who fell under the lash were condemned in terms which, if used at the present time, would probably send the hypersensitive or the incompetent, which is the same thing, post-haste to their solicitors. However, on the other hand, although the Press could strangle a play at birth, it certainly was able to "make" an author or an actor overnight. Of all the critics writing at this time about the theatre, the most powerful in this direction was Mr. Clement Scott of the *Daily Telegraph*. It was no uncommon thing for him to write a notice of a column and a half, and being a man unrivalled in his knowledge of the technique of acting, if he allowed

his temperamental pen to run riot it meant either "the winter of discontent" for the poor player or a move from lodgings in the Brixton Road to the sunshine of Mayfair. At times he dabbled in playwriting, but with little success. He wrote quite a possible version of the French play "Denise," for which he received money on account of author's fees at different times from various managers, all of whom, however, elected to allow their rights to lapse. A story was told about this piece which was probably untrue but quite amusing. Scott received a notification to say that at last it was to be produced. Instead of being delighted at the news, his only remark was, "Oh! Then I'm ruined." He was greatly feared, and was known in Theatreland as "Holy Clement."

The stage, not only in the Vintage Years but in the days which preceded and followed them, owed a deep debt of gratitude to that great newspaper proprietor, Sir Edward Lawson, afterwards Lord Burnham, who, as an ardent lover of the drama and a critic whose judgment was unerring, never failed to encourage in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph* all that was worth while in the art of the theatre. It was he, indeed, who was the first to realize the genius of Henry Irving, and having done so, hastened to impress upon the public the fact that a mighty actor was playing Mathias in "The Bells" at the Lyceum Theatre. From that hour Henry Irving never once looked back, and his name lives to-day in stage history bracketed with those of David Garrick, Edmund Kean, Macready, John and Philip Kemble and Edmund Phelps. There have been many other wonderful actors, but these seven tremendous figures are the immortals who will live for ever as they have done over the years which number a century and a half.

At Drury Lane Augustus Harris, without doubt the greatest producer of theatre spectacle that England had ever known, was in command, and at the old Gaiety and Daly's George Edwardes, equally successful in his own line, gave to the public musical comedy and light opera as they had never before had it presented to them. George Edwardes was a man of tremendous charm, but it is odd to remember that he had little or no sense of humour, and so far as music was concerned it is possible that he might have known the difference between "Abide with Me" and the National Anthem, but this is doubtful.

The influence of these remarkable theatre figures is felt even to-day, for it was George Edwardes who invented musical comedy

in modern clothes, and it was Augustus Harris who, painting on the broader canvas of grand opera, melodrama and spectacle, never hesitated to spend small fortunes to obtain all his boundless vision demanded. The first of the colossal annual dramas which he produced at Drury Lane was called "Human Nature," and one of its sensation scenes was a troopship leaving port crowded with soldiers going on active service. This is mentioned because it is interesting to remember that a major in the artillery whose advice he took on all matters of military detail became in later years Lord Kitchener of Khartoum.

It was in the late Eighties that Sir Augustus Harris decided to run a series of Fancy Dress Balls at Covent Garden Theatre during the London Season. This he did on a scale never before attempted, and they proved an enormous success. Not only the ordinary public were willing to pay one guinea for their tickets, but everybody who was anybody flocked to Harris's Arabian Nights Entertainment. The price of the boxes which the Smart Set occupied ranged from ten pounds upwards, some of them, indeed, costing as much as thirty or forty guineas.

Towards the end of the Nineties these routs became less fashionable, but for several years the best-known men and women in Society were regular attendants at the Opera House, all of them, if not appearing in Fancy Dresses, being masked and in most attractive dominoes. The majority of the prizes offered on these occasions for the best, or the most beautiful, or the most original, or the most amusing costumes were extremely valuable, and people thought nothing of hiring dresses which cost them as much as ten or fifteen guineas for the night, or of paying a hundred pounds for a creation especially designed for them.

A costume which the writer remembers having taken a first prize was worn by a lovely lady, and she called it "Famous Seaside Resorts." The dress was of pale blue satin with a train six feet long. It was divided into panels, and on every one of them well-known artists who were her friends had painted exquisite pictures of England's best-known watering-places. It was a real work of art, and one that it may be hoped has been preserved as such. Perhaps it has, though it is highly improbable that the grandchildren who admire it are aware of the merry night the now demure grand-mamma they know spent in it, or where she was acclaimed "Queen of the Revels" by a noisy crowd.

At these Covent Garden Balls the nobility and distinguished people gave elaborate supper-parties in the retiring-rooms adjoining their boxes, while the ordinary public who had only paid for admission (fancy dress in all cases being compulsory) thronged the foyers, in which tables were laid and where they were served by an army of waiters.

To look down at the floor from a height when the Ball was in full swing, and watch the hundreds and hundreds of dancers, was a sight which for sheer beauty and riot of colour has seldom been equalled in London. The theatre was never full till about ten o'clock, and then for several hours the fun was fast and furious, while, everyone being masked till after supper, harmless liberties were taken and sweet nothings whispered to strangers as the giddy throng wandered through a mist of confetti and a maze of paper streamers. Towards two in the morning, however, the boxes emptied, and it was not till Mayfair had vacated them and wended its way westwards that the bloods of the town took charge of the proceedings. This they generally did in no uncertain manner. As good-humoured horse-play became the order of the revels many an immaculate Charles Surface, Romeo, Greek God or Classic Figure of the midnight hour found himself at six in the morning in Covent Garden Market, looking slightly bedraggled and a trifle jaded. Sleepy-eyed drivers of carts laden with vegetables gazed in wonderment at princes and peasants, pierrots and historic characters, who in almost countless numbers escorted ladies frail but no longer fair, many of whom, having studied the wine list continuously, tumbled into the growlers and hansoms that had waited throughout the night to drive them home, the charge demanded being often ten times the amount of the legal fare.

On one of these happy evenings, as W. S. Gilbert was leaving the theatre he made a typically Gilbertian jest, when an inebriated gentleman dressed as a gondolier bumped into him and held on to him for support. To a question from the great librettist as to who the reveller thought he was supposed to be, and receiving the reply that he was a Venetian gondolier, Gilbert, gently disentangling himself, said, "No, sir, you are a Venetian blind."

When the last roisterer had bidden an affectionately alcoholic farewell to the commissionaires at the great front doors of England's Home of Opera, the now silent house was taken over by troops

of mechanics and technicians who removed the dance floor, which was a miracle of ingenuity; and having done so, the rows of stalls, no doubt indignant at having been hastily removed on the previous night, were set again in the places which were theirs by right, and the auditorium, as though an Abanazar had waved his wand, was in an incredibly short space of time itself again, a diamond-bedecked and dignified hostess for guests that sat enthralled listening to the Australian nightingale in "Bohème."

Adelina Patti had long gone into retirement, and Melba, the Queen of Song, as indeed she was, reigned supreme. Throughout her career many a rival unsuccessfully challenged her supremacy, but even when her divine voice had lost something of its freshness her matchless technique still enthralled the world five-and-thirty years after the night that Caruso and Scotti first stood on the stage with her to make history. For those who heard Dame Nellie Melba the glory of her art will linger a heavenly memory, of which Time the Thief will be unable to rob them, however stealthily he may purloin many another pleasure.

It is the privilege of every decade to forget, and even as I scribble it is strange to think that in the Roaring Forties the fame of two great singers, the Brothers De Reszke, is only known to the ordinary present-day public by the brand of cigarettes which bears their name. Is it possible that Melba will be handed down to posterity as someone who invented a delicious sauce for hot-house peaches, and a novel way of making toast palatable for those whose figures are as bulky as their banking accounts, or the many who are proud of letting their companions of the feast know that they possess their own teeth? Who can tell? It is not unlikely, for that sad line, "Are we so soon forgotten when we are gone?" is the most simple of all questions to answer, the world being but a storehouse of perishable goods, and rosemary a flower seldom to be met with on this grain of sand which is but a grain of sand in the vast Sahara which we call The Universe.

In the Vintage Years nearly all the London theatres were small compared with the vast houses of to-day. Being much more intimate, the actors were able to obtain their effects with greater ease than is possible where auditoriums are built to accommodate great crowds. One of the principal charms of theatre-going in

the old days was that evening dress was indispensable in the stalls of all the West End playhouses, and except in the back rows of the circle no one would have dreamed of appearing in ordinary street clothes unless he wanted to be taken for an escaped lunatic. Smoking, except in the foyers and bars between the acts, was of course unheard of except in the music halls, this horrible custom only becoming fashionable in 1914. In the Nineties a certain mystery still surrounded the art of the theatre, and none of the great players of the day were ever seen sitting next their patrons in restaurants or public places. Indeed, it was not till the illustrated papers made a feature of "celebrities at home" that the private lives of artists became everybody's property and the stage was robbed of much of its glamour. As the fascination of a beautiful woman should for ever remain indescribable and herself an enigma if she would hold her admirers her slaves, so the Hamlets, the Romeos, the Charles Surfaces and the Mercutios, to say nothing of Shakespeare's heroines and Sheridan's ladies, should never be seen eating bacon and eggs, or be thought to have a sneaking regard for sausage and mash or the little fish which is enticed from its shell by a pin—even though it be a jewelled ornament that first peeped at the world through a window in the Rue de la Paix.

In mentioning Sheridan's name, one of his little-known but wittiest sallies connected with the theatre is worth recalling. During his tenancy of the National Theatre it was burned to the ground, and seated in an armchair in front of the portico, watching the conflagration, he was told by a fireman to get up and go away. "Why?" asked Sheridan. "Surely a man can warm his feet at his own fireside." A sense of humour and good health should be everyone's toast with their morning cup of tea.

The fact that in the Eighties there were no theatres in Shaftesbury Avenue was stressed on an earlier page, but in the Nineties three were built in this now centre of entertainment. They were the Palace, the Lyric and the Shaftesbury. The Palace, afterwards to become a music hall, opened with a semi-grand opera called "Ivanhoe," by Sir Arthur Sullivan. It was not a success, and was the only music that great musician ever wrote which did not take the town by storm.

The Lyric Theatre opened with "Dorothy" on December 17, 1888, with Marie Tempest and Hayden Coffin in the leading

parts. It may here be mentioned that it was at the Lyric that Duse made her first appearance in London, in 1893. On the first night at the Shaftesbury Theatre the audience was dismissed, as owing to some mechanical defect it was found impossible to raise the iron safety curtain.

It was during Mr. E. S. Willard's tenancy of this house that the finest dramatic situation in "The Middleman," a play by Henry Arthur Jones, was ruined through a hawker being heard by the audience offering his goods for sale in a yard at the back of the stage. The story of the play, which was laid in the Potteries, concerned the discovery of a new glaze by an old potter, an ordinary hand in a famous firm, named Cyrus Blenkarn. The situation in the third act was the frantic endeavours of this poor man to keep the heat in the kiln sufficiently great to ensure the perfection of his life's work. Running short of fuel, he flung furniture and everything that would burn into the furnace, the tragic climax of the scene being reached when, having sacrificed all his belongings, he was faced with disaster, realizing that he had nothing left and that the fire must die down.

The magnificent acting of a fine artist never failed to gain enthusiastic applause, but on this particular night the curtain came down to roars of laughter, for the voice of a coal merchant was heard in the distance shouting, "Coke four shillings a hundred-weight, coke!!!"

It is curious to remember that while in the days of Edmund Phelps (i.e. in the Seventies) theatre patrons journeyed by coach to Sadler's Wells to see this greatest of tragedians, in the early Nineties the only playhouse outside the West End's magic circle was the little Court Theatre in Sloane Square. There being no suburban houses of any kind, people living in the outlying districts who were anxious to see the latest London success were obliged to come to Town by train or bus; and if they had not booked their seats they were compelled to join the crowds waiting for admission, who thought nothing of standing for hours outside the pit or gallery doors—these being the days of really enthusiastic playgoers. At a benefit *matinée* given to that popular idol of the Gaiety Theatre, Nellie Farren, on her retirement, the patrons of the cheaper seats in Drury Lane commenced lining up *on the morning of the previous day*. Never, I suppose, was a greater laugh heard in any theatre than on this occasion when, in a one-act

play, Miss Ellaline Terriss spoke the opening line of the entertainment—to the writer. It was, "My goodness, you *have* kept me a long time waiting!!"

While it is differences of opinion that make horse-racing, comparison as to quality when discussing artists is generally a waste of time, for diametrically opposed points of view seldom lead to finality; but he would be a bold man who ventured that at any period the theatre was better served musically than in those Vintage Years between 1890 and 1910. Excluding Sir Arthur Sullivan, who since the early Eighties had been the crowned king of British Light Opera, a remarkable set of men were scoring success after success with their setting of the new form of musical plays. How good beyond words were their melodies is proved by the fact that the names of Ivan Caryll, Lionel Monckton, Paul Rubens and Leslie Stuart live to this day. Others of course there were, and among them one must not forget that Walter Slaughter might almost have collaborated with Lewis Carroll in the writing of "Alice in Wonderland," so perfectly was every note of his score in harmony with the delicious nonsense of that fantastic classic.

At Covent Garden the opera seasons had never been more brilliant, for now Melba was in her zenith, as were the De Reszkes and Plançon, while in the not-far-distance the voices of Caruso and Scotti were heard as they set out to visit London for the first time. Of new works, "Cavalleria Rusticana," "L'Amico Fritz," with "Madame Butterfly" to follow, held the Metropolis enthralled. What a charm of manner both on and off the stage had Scotti, and what a gay fellow was Caruso! It is said that Signor Foli of the magic voice in bygone years more often than not stood in the wings with a cigar in his mouth, and only threw it away just before he stepped upon the stage in one of his most famous rôles. So Caruso. Time and again he was to be seen dining at a little restaurant called Treviglio in Soho, running it so fine that sometimes he only reached his dressing-room a quarter of an hour before that voice, the like of which we shall never hear again, electrified the house and left it silent and amazed before it burst into prolonged cheering.

It was in the Nineties that the music halls were all packed to overflowing, as well they might be, for the programmes they presented were of their kind superlatively good. These were the days before sketches, plays and spectacle were part of the per-

formance, the show depending solely on individual variety artists, the majority of whom were outstanding public favourites, while even the smaller turns on the bill were always excellent.

To mention only a few of the great stars, it will be seen that the list is a most imposing one. They were Vesta Tilley, Marie Lloyd, Arthur Roberts, Albert Chevalier, Eugene Stratton, Little Tich, Cinquevalli, Dan Leno, Herbert Campbell, Lottie Collins, Bessie Bellwood, Charles Godfrey, Vance, and Charles Coborn. Many of these names live to-day, a fact which in itself goes to show that the men and women who bore them were no ordinary people. Vesta Tilley, who was the greatest male impersonator of all time, is still with us; Marie Lloyd, an idol of idols, who could put as much meaning into a nod and a wink as any singer of character songs the English or French stage has ever taken to their hearts; Dan Leno, one of the greatest of comic geniuses, who seemed absolutely to live his creations and whether as a Dame, a Huntsman or a Beefeater, was a perfectly possible impossible person; Albert Chevalier, who immortalized the Coster and could compel pity and tears as well as laughter; Eugene Stratton, who as a black-faced comedian has never been equalled, not only made his audiences believe that girls called Little Dolly Daydream and the Lily of Laguna existed, but as a dancer beautiful beyond words seemed to be a feather blown hither and thither by Leslie Stuart's melodies which he taught the town to sing; Little Tich, the quaintest figure imaginable, danced in boots with wooden soles literally as long as he was high; and Charles Coborn, of "Two Lovely Black Eyes" and "Monte Carlo" fame, "made the people sing" many years before the song of that name which we hear to-day was written. Charles Godfrey was a forceful dramatic performer, and he gave his ditties of London life and patriotic sentiment with such gusto that he carried his audiences with him in the same way as Lottie Collins, whose colossal vitality made "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" even more tremendous than was intended by its authors.

The most famous London West End music halls were the Tivoli, the Pavilion and the Trocadero, where more often than not twenty-five well-known artists appeared at every performance. Had it been possible to replace the wonderful personalities mentioned, the halls would be as alive to-day as they ever were.

Because change is inevitable, it should by no means prove unwelcome. The past may, perhaps, feel a trifle aggrieved that the

dawn of another day has cast a shadow across the land over which for many a year it has held undisputed proprietary rights, but if a new tenant is gentleman enough to smile good-naturedly at what the world once applauded, and does not condemn it to the limbo of to-be-forgotten things, the years that have grown old almost before they realized they had grown up should rest well content that they have been allowed to have their permitted say. Of the change in minor matters, nothing is more noticeable than the alteration in style and presentation of the popular ballad and music hall song of the Vintage Years. To read their words in cold blood, many of which by no stretch of imagination can be raised to the dignity of lyrics, may cause the moderns who have been suckled on the sentiment beloved of the crooners (singers who have discovered an excuse for long-departed vocal cords) to wonder what manner of men and women were they who appeared satisfied with that which must appear to them unmitigated balderdash. However, if they troubled to enquire they would learn that the old-time music hall audiences were composed of unsophisticated hearty folk, who would have been robbed of half the pleasure of their evenings had they not joined lustily in a chorus and so become as much part of the entertainment as the performers they had paid to see. Rough, ready, and obvious these songs may have been, but they expressed in no small measure the spirit and vitality of the British people. Take, for instance, one of the most stirring military marching songs of the period—"Tommy Atkins"—sung with "good accent and good discretion" by that unrivalled artist in his own particular line, Mr. Hayden Coffin, the hero of many a Daly's Theatre triumph. It is a straightforward honest effort. There is no peeping round the corner to try and find subtle rhyme or highbrow couplet. Its refrain was written as a tribute to our fighting men, and meaning what it said, and saying what it meant, its appeal was immediate :

Tommy, Tommy, Tommy Atkins,
You're a good 'n heart and hand,
You're a credit to your country
And to all your native land.
May your love be ever faithful,
May your girl be ever true,
Oh! Tommy, Tommy Atkins,
Here's your country's love to you.

And the same may be said of a ballad "Queen of my Heart," which helped to make "Dorothy"—the most charming of light operas—such a phenomenal success. This, as will be seen, was a no indefinite request by a lover to his lady. There was no mixing of metaphor with desire. A modern Romeo wanted his Juliet and made no bones about it. Hark how youth demanded entry to the chamber where a maiden who, having banished sleep, listened, may we hope, with a smile of welcome upon her lips :

I stand at your threshold sighing
 As the cruel hours pass by,
 And the time is slowly dying
 Which once too quickly did fly.
 Your beauty o'er my being
 Has cast a subtle spell,
 And alas there is no fleeing
 From the charms that you wield so well.
 My heart is wildly beating
 As it never beat before ;
 One word, one tender greeting,
 In mercy I implore.

From daylight a hint we might borrow,
 And prudence may come with the light,
 So why should we wait till to-morrow,
 You are queen of my heart to-night.

The light comedy descriptive songs were also simple and to the point, and their straightforward melodies easy to pick up. Among many of this kind the story of "Daisy Bell" swept London off its feet, while the tale of another fair one, who rejoiced in the name of Cerulia, was equally successful. She, however, seems not to have wanted a bicycle made for two, and instead of her hand she gave a headache to the gentleman on whose lap she appears to have often sat with considerable enjoyment.

Cerulia was beautiful,
 Cerulia was fair,
 She lived with her maiden aunt
 In Bloomsbury Square,
 She once was my Canoodle'um,
 But now, alas, she
 Plays kissey kissey with an officer
 In the *Ar-till-er-REY* !!!

It is to be hoped that this ardent admirer got over his disappointment, for while a cynic has declared that a lady shorthand writer is the only person a man can dictate to, it is equally certain that if a gentleman takes a woman on his knee she will probably sit on him for ever.

A charmer of the name of Nancy Tilly, who, though sadly lacking in brains, seems to have been of comfortable proportions, was less fickle than Cerulia, though apparently not so much sought after by the contemporaries of her fiancé. She was described by her future husband as being

Fat, Fair and Forty,
Rather haughty, haughty, haughty,
Golden hair right down to there,
It isn't all her own.
Still her name's Nancy Tilly,
Rather Silly Silly Silly,
And all the boys shout out to me,
Why don't you let her go?

Another type of chorus song was one which may be described as "The challenging number"—the stock-in-trade of the buxom serio-comic, who was always the girl friend of the entire pit and gallery. How coy she was as right, left and centre she flashed messages from eyes guarded by eyebrows black as night, which sheltered beneath a veritable bolster of peroxide hair. Every male member of the audience fell under her spell as she informed them archly that they were all deceivers:

"Oh! Yes you are." (She chastized them.)
"No, we're *not*." (Came the indignant reply.)
"Yes you *are*." (She grew more emphatic.)
"No we're *not*." (The audience shouted.)
"You're a gang of unbelievers." (Her teeth were now aglow.)
"And a pack of base deceivers." (Her other set now appeared.)
"No we're not." (Louder still.)
"Yes you are, you know you are,
But still I think that you're all right."

These last two lines being delivered with an air of demure forgiveness for all that she had presumably suffered, at the hands of

every male member of the audience, she was cheered to the echo before attacking the house again.

And then there was nothing more popular than "The Sister Act." Two beautiful sisters who had first met in an agent's office. With their dresses alike, their features alike, their steps alike and their voices unfortunately very alike, they informed all and sundry that they were

Fresh, fresh, fresh as the morning,
Sweeter than new-mown hay ;
Fresh, fresh, fresh as the morning,
And just what you want to-day.

Having duly advertised their charms, before breaking into a dance, which generally finished with a step known to experts as "Off to Buffalo," they confided to their host of enthralled spectators that sometimes

The Gypsies will strike us with a bone,
And in every sort of weather
We wander out together
And in the stream we often throw a stone.

Four lines which explained the cruelty of Romany, their own utter disregard for the elements, their love for each other, and the way they took violent exercise.

British boys and girls also took a sympathetic interest in the dainty maid of generally too many summers when she opened her heart and told them that

Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow,
Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow,
But I've got a little cat
And I'm very fond of that,
Though I'd rather have a bow-wow-wow.

For two whole years the sad story of a simple village maiden was told by the writer at the old Gaiety Theatre, in a play called "The Shop Girl." It was the first of the slightly shocking Pink Songs for Pale People. The words may look innocuous enough on paper, but a world of meaning may be imparted into the lines of a chorus by a wink and a pause, and an apparent wish to give

a poor girl the benefit of any doubt as to her behaviour when she ran away from home :

Oh ! Flo, what a change you know.
When she left the village she was shy,
But alas and alack
She came back
With . . . a naughty little twinkle in her eye.

It will be remembered by many of this little truant that "Her Golden Hair was hanging down her back."

Ditties were dedicated to the God Bacchus by the very broad low comedians in the Nineties, but there were others equally successful which neither had appeal to those who were thirsty nor to those possessed of any subtlety whatever. Of these, two which the Town sang were, "Get your hair cut" and "Where did you get that hat?" Jingoism was not the exclusive property of the immaculately dressed Lion Comique of the day, for an effort entitled, "Up, Guards, and at 'em," handed out by a red-nosed humorist, sent the blood coursing through the veins of every true patriot. This will be easily understood when such a refrain as the following fell lightly on the ear :

Up, Guards, and at 'em !
Charge, Chester, charge !
Ours not to bluster or brag,
The noble Militia no longer will say
You shan't wipe your nose on our flag.

To know of all that happened "Down at the old Bull and Bush" was a thing that even teetotallers were glad to hear about, and England sang a Coster song, the catchy melody of which was set to words which, though pregnant with tragedy, were relieved by a chivalrous resolution worthy of Louis Quatorze at his best :

I aint a'going to tell,
I aint a'going to tell,
I know enough to break 'is 'eart
But I aint a'going to tell!!

When His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales came to the throne there were rumours of war, and nothing was more reassuring than a song called "There'll be no war" delivered with

infinite feeling by a music hall lady star. The women of England joined whole-heartedly in the chorus, sweethearts, wives and mothers being certain and happy that they were listening to first-hand information given to the lady by the Monarch himself:

There'll be no wa-ar
As long as there's a King like good King Edward,
There'll be no wa-ar,
'E 'ates that sort of thing.
Mothers don't worry
As long as there's a King like good King Hedward.
Peace and Honour is the thing that he adores,
So God bless our King!!

These are a few specimens from a set which numbered hundreds.

Towards the middle of the Nineties, modern musical comedy having become firmly established at the Gaiety, Daly's and the Prince of Wales's Theatres, really brilliant lyrists devoted their time and attention to this class of work, thereby setting many an ordinary "book" on a plane it would not otherwise have deserved. Foremost among these gentlemen were Adrian Ross, Harry and Percy Greenbank, Captain Harry Graham, Charles Taylor, Reginald Arkell and others, all of whom, possessing real wit, gave a polish and quality to verse worthy of the musicians who made musical comedy history.

That the "Old Variety" as it was will ever come back again in a blaze of glory is highly improbable, for the crooner has stepped in where angels used to tread, and the cinema serves up for a new generation a new form of entertainment with which, for the time being at any rate, it appears to be well content.

It is not generally known that a law which, if I am not mistaken, is still in existence prohibits dialogue of any kind to be spoken in a music hall. This came into force owing to the fact that the comedians engaged to amuse the public who frequented dives such as Billy Passe's Cider Cellars, and the low-class "Sing Song" establishments in the Sixties were so obscene that the police called for legislation, which was granted and has never been repealed. Theoretically, therefore, it is open to the public

informer to make himself a nuisance to-day, though it is certain that his activities would soon be put an end to, as was the case when this sort of thing was attempted some years ago in connection with the Lord's Day Observance Act.

The popular songs of the Nineties were whistled for months, for there was no mechanical means of recording them and the public were obliged to pick up the melodies at the houses where they were being sung, or to buy sheet music or vocal scores. To-day the radio and gramophone are able to repeat "real hits" so continually that three months sees most numbers on the wane which in the old happy days would probably have lived for two years.

One of the greatest romances in commercial musical enterprise must surely be that of His Master's Voice. The first gramophone brought to England was a small affair worked by hand in a room in the basement of the old Hotel Cecil. The shrewd business brain that saw endless possibilities in what nearly everyone considered only a novel toy never gave up hope that sooner or later light would shine in the darkness and perseverance win the day. For many a month financiers looked at it askance and artists were not interested, when suddenly a stroke of genius changed the entire position. *Melba was offered a thousand pounds to make a record!!!* This contract she accepted, and her voice was heard throughout the land by millions who had never even been to London, let alone to Covent Garden. From that moment, success from every angle was assured. One man working in a small room has lived to see factories spring up to house his child, and thousands of people to look after it, work for it, and year by year bring it to perfection. Truly a very great achievement.

The Trade Mark H.M.V. was an inspiration!! Who has not seen it? A terrier at the funnel of one of the first machines listening to His Master's Voice. This was suggested by a stranger. What a true knowledge of humanity did he exhibit! Again a man of vision decided that an appeal so human could not fail to touch our hearts. How right he was!!

In thinking of the mechanical and its effect on living entertainments, the injury done to theatre enterprise pure and simple by the cinema industry is less in its challenge to flesh and blood as an art—for this could never be—than from the very definitely established fact that, there being only a certain amount of money

which can be allocated for the purposes of amusement, the play-house has been robbed of many patrons with limited means, who not unnaturally became picture-minded through the prices of admission better suiting their purses. However, as the movies only made their bow to an astonished world in 1906, one is more concerned in writing of the Nineties to remember the first somewhat primitive mechanical contrivances, which were the grandparents of the perfect screen and radio of to-day. These were the bioscope and the electrophone, the latter enabling "well-to-do" people to sit in their homes with earphones clamped on their heads to listen to the musical comedies being given at the most fashionable London theatres. Both, therefore, being of potential greatness, we can again say whole-heartedly, "Hats off to the Nineties!!!"

The neighbourhood surrounding the now solitary-looking church of St. Clement Danes has not altered much, and except that it has been considerably widened, the Strand has changed but little since the year 1885. Walking towards Charing Cross, the Edwardian would notice that on the left-hand side a small theatre had vanished. This was Terry's, built by and called after the Gaiety comedian of that name. Sauntering along, he would become aware that no longer would he be obliged to walk down an incline to the little grill room of the Savoy Hotel that he once knew. In vain he would search for the comparatively modest entrance of this famous hostelry, and what a surprise to find in its place a silver-plated courtyard, in which to the right he would see the Box Office of the new modernistic Savoy Theatre. One may be pardoned perhaps, in speaking of the Box Office of the old Savoy, which faced the Embankment, remembering one of W. S. Gilbert's characteristic replies which he made to an attendant at the front of the house when he enquired of him if he had seen Mrs. Gilbert.

"Yes, sir," said the man, "she is round behind."

"I know that," replied Gilbert, "but where is she?"

Strolling along on the same side of the street, our Edwardian would notice that the old Tivoli Music Hall, once famous for the galaxy of stars that appeared upon its boards each evening, was no more, and that in its place a super-cinema had arisen. Also that

where once the Hotel Cecil—a house of mammoth proportions—stood, he would find an entrance to the building now occupied by Shell-Mex.

On the other side of the Strand, almost facing Charing Cross Station, the most important frontage for which he would search in vain would be that of the Lowther Arcade, which was once the Mecca of London's children, who flocked there to gloat open-eyed on every conceivable kind of doll and toy. He might feel a little sad perhaps as he gazed at the Adelphi Theatre near by, for in his time the entrance of this historic house of melodrama was that of a real theatre, and not as it is to-day, a thing of uninviting flatness.

The only other playhouse that has vanished from this magic amusement circle is Toole's Theatre, originally called The Folly. Strangely enough, this little home of fun stood in the very middle of Charing Cross Hospital, its main entrance being practically where the doors, ever open for the reception of casualties, now are.

It was in this tiny theatre, which when full only held £139, that one of the most amusing and best-loved of Victorian comedians, J. L. Toole, produced in 1892 with such instantaneous and prolonged success J. M. Barrie's first play "Walker, London." It ran for nearly two years.

It was about this time that a rising young painter by the name of John Lavery came to London, and, being a friend of Barrie's, he often visited Toole's Theatre in company with Thomas Hardy. They both delighted in sitting in the wings. The writer well remembers that on being asked by the great portrait-painter if he could find a pretty young girl to sit for him, he was able to do so. The lady happened to be understudying in the Barrie play, and was paid five shillings a morning for "modelling," a sum which not only enhanced her income but suited the pocket of a then not very affluent artist. Sir John Lavery in those days was a shy and courteous gentleman, and remained so all his very successful life. His portraits make a gallery of famous men and beautiful women that will illustrate better than anything else the times in which he lived.

When "Walker, London" was produced, J. L. Toole was long past his prime as a comedian and, indeed, being crippled with

gout, was only able to hobble about the stage. Generous and kindly, he may be said to have been the last of the Practical Jokers, a form of very questionable fun which flourished in the Eighties. To-day, thank goodness, there is no time or inclination to consider such abysmal imbecility, but fifty years ago no trouble was too great for the Super Jokers to take in their endeavour to create situations for their amusement and the discomfort or embarrassment of their victims. Very often they sent out orders to a hundred coal merchants, each to deliver a ton of coals at a given time at the same address, or inserted "Wanted" advertisements in the daily papers for various types of dogs to be brought on approval to the residence of someone who was known to be anything but a dog-lover.

Another favourite joke (?) was to send out a quantity of invitations to dinner from some well-known person famed for his hospitality, and so on and so on. All of which caused anger, bewilderment and endless confusion. A sense of humour must have been sadly lacking among the instigators of these childlike pranks, and though it is difficult to believe, it is nevertheless a fact that many of the men who were responsible for this class of thing and gloried in it were persons of note and considerable standing.

However, dear old Mr. Toole's brand of practical joking was of a very simple kind which, while giving him a deal of pleasure, inconvenienced nobody. As an instance of the form of fun he liked, on one occasion he gave a garden-party at his house in Maida Vale and spent over a hundred pounds in arranging that every ordinary shrub should apparently be bearing fruit. Bunches of grapes were seen growing on the ivy, the laurels were laden with currants, cherries ripened on the privet hedges, strawberries were in profusion on the dustbin, and tomatoes in clusters on the rose-covered pergolas. All this tremendous trouble was taken solely that the old gentleman, having watched the astonishment on the faces of his guests, might explain that he had made a life-study of grafting in all its branches.

Once while on holiday at Marienbad he entered a bank, and pretending he thought it was a pawnshop, placed his watch and gold-headed walking-stick on the counter and asked for a loan of five pounds. The clerks did their best to explain that the place was not a pawnbroker's, but nothing they said seemed to convey

anything to him. All he did was to take off his rings and empty his pockets, enquiring if they would advance the money on this further security. Long explanations resulted in heated arguments, and the business of the bank being held up, the manager was sent for, who, being unable to do any better with him than the clerks, lost his temper and sent for a policeman. It was only then that Toole, looking as innocent as a new-born babe, took out a letter of credit for a thousand pounds and said, "Well, is this any good?"

The writer remembers being with him at Bath, when without the slightest warning he entered an ironmonger's and asked a rather stupid-looking boy who was in charge of the shop if he could let him have a copy of *Sartor Resartus* bound in calf. The lad, not having the remotest idea what was wanted, got into a first-class wrangle with the apparently angry customer. At last he called out to the owner of the establishment and told him that he was unable to handle an old man who was obviously an escaped lunatic. Most politely the ironmonger enquired what it was he wanted, to which Toole said, "I am trying to explain that I want a shilling hammer and a pennyworth of tin tacks." On hearing so ordinary a request the boy's employer lost his temper and told the lad that he must be a congenital idiot not to understand, at the same time apologizing profoundly for his assistant's stupidity. The boy then became extremely rude to his master, and it was not till Toole joined in the row and explained that *Sartor Resartus* was what a hammer and nails was called in the part of Wales he came from that peace was restored. Toole then paid for the goods with a five-pound note, and after making endless muddles, counting and recounting the change, gave a sovereign to the boy and made him a present of the hammer, saying he thought he could knock the tacks in better with a hairbrush. The boy gasped, Toole winked, and the ironmonger, dumbfounded, watched the strangest customer he had ever served limp away chuckling down the street.

This much-loved old man left a fortune of more than ninety thousand pounds—a large proportion of which had been made out of J. M. Barrie's play. The rent of his theatre was negligible, his salary list was very small, and as he had bought the play outright for four hundred pounds he was, as they say in cricketing circles, "batting on an easy wicket."

The Prince of Wales liked Toole immensely, and the comedian not only had the honour of entertaining the Prince on several occasions, but was many times the guest of his future King.

The Strand has ever been the main artery through which the life-blood of the City has flowed towards the West End, and this being so, it has never ceased to rank as one of the most famous thoroughfares in the Empire. In the Nineties it was always one of the first streets to open its eyes for the workaday world and the last to close them for the pleasure-seekers of the town, it being at this time Theatreland and Restaurantland combined. Here all classes of the amusement-loving public were catered for. At the Tivoli they found Variety; at the Vaudeville, Comedy; at the Savoy, Light Opera; at the Gaiety, Musical Comedy; at the Adelphi, Melodrama; and at the Lyceum, Tragedy. These varied forms of entertainment had their homes within a stone's throw of each other, all with a settled policy that never changed.

The places that were exclusively devoted to the wants of the inner man were many and varied, the most fashionable of them being the Savoy Hotel, built for the leisured classes who sought and could pay for the best of everything.

At Romano's, a small but lively restaurant, all the brightest lights in Bohemia forgathered: actors, artists, sportsmen and journalists, and with them beautiful women who were wise enough to realize that amusing companions are of greater value than the cheques torn from the passbooks of bald-headed old gentlemen.

The Adelaide Gallery supplied a long-felt want, it being here that the Messrs. A. & S. Gatti with foresight and understanding gave London a restaurant in which timid maid and highly respectable middle-class matron could sit alone without fear of being accosted by strangers.

Another celebrated place in the district for luncheon and dinner was Simpson's, which was always crowded.

The Strand with all its bustle in the Nineties was, compared with its hectic rush of to-day, almost restful, for only the horse bus ambled, the growler crawled, and the hansom was content to jingle at an even pace. Policemen were often to be seen talking quietly in the middle of the traffic, while pedestrians crossed and

recrossed without undue haste, for although the road was always full, life was not then such a strain and men and women were not compelled to dice with death as they do to-day.

It was in the Nineties that small orchestras first found their way into hotels and restaurants, though of course such a thing as cabarets and dancing were undreamed of. Hitherto the customers at these places had been content to hear each other talk, for in the times of which we are thinking the talk was good, London being peopled by "characters" whose wit, having garnished the dishes at dinner, was served up by those who had enjoyed it on the following noon at luncheon. The line "Let Rissoles be bygones" had not as yet been written.

It is the custom to-day to attribute every good story to the members of the Stock Exchange, but in the old days Romano's was the home of rapier wit, and this is not to be wondered at, seeing that not only did the most nimble-tongued comedians make it their club, but here also almost lived many of the professional humorists whose job it was to make the nation laugh in their weekly newspapers. It was the meeting-place, for instance, of the staff of the *Sporting Times*, known as the *Pink'un*, a gay and saucy weekly production edited by Mr. John Corlett, who had gathered round him a company of brilliant writers. This merry journal, printed on pink paper, was a sort of "Man about Town's Bible," for what the *Pink'un* said on Saturday the Town lived on for the next six days. Never, one imagines, has any London restaurant ever boasted such a varied assortment of human beings as were to be found at Romano's. At every table sat men and women whose names appeared in *Who's Who?*, and a few others in a book yet to be written called "The Yard." Peers of the realm, jockeys, theatre managers, journalists, authors, actors, composers, financiers, young Guardsmen, racehorse owners, book-makers, betting men, and those interested in the Noble Art, all heads of their various callings or situations in life met there, while to make this strange *pousse café* complete, charmers who added to the gaiety of London by doing nothing particular when appearing in the choruses of the latest musical comedy successes were to be seen on every hand, either proposing or being proposed to. "The Roman," as Romano himself was called, held a unique position in the Land of Bohemia; swarthy of countenance and black as ink his hair, had he been a singer in romantic opera he would

have looked the genial brigand to the life. Within his expensive bosom were locked the secrets of all his clients, but whether a horse was to be pulled, a market to be rigged, a lover to be thrown over or a fight to be squared, he as the perfect restaurateur was as silent as a moneylender who had been asked for a loan without security. His favourite pastime was tossing for sovereigns, and seldom a day passed after luncheon when he was free that he did not spend an hour or two with some of the clients who were his friends, matching golden tokens.

In these days the famous Mr. Luigi was one of his waiters, and he no doubt owed much of his success in after-life at the Embassy Club and elsewhere to having been under such a master of tact and discretion.

The old Simpson's, on the other hand, was a totally different class of establishment, and was what might well be termed an old-fashioned Eating-House de Luxe. It was a somewhat austere and solidly respectable institution, a place beloved by knowledgeable folk who understood that there is no food to be compared with good English meat, plainly cooked. Here a cut off the joint and a second helping with cheese to follow cost no more than 2s. 6d. This house was frequented principally by the middle-aged who delighted in the Dickensian atmosphere which pervaded not only the mahogany partitions that divided many of the tables but even encircled the waiters. These men were so absolutely "Simpson" that it would have been a fairly safe thing to bet they were all born at the age of fifty in ill-fitting dress-suits holding a napkin in each hand. The head waiter at this world-famous link with the Seventies rejoiced in the name of Charles Flowerdew. Own brother to a Leech model, he shuffled or dug his heels into the carpet as he conducted the customers to or from their seats, and few were allowed to escape without accepting a pinch of snuff from the box he carried in his waistcoat pocket.

The hour for dining at Simpson's was generally about seven, and few people remained there after nine. At ten o'clock in the main room on the first floor, lit as it was by gas jets which had been lowered, should a customer have returned to search for something he had left behind him he would have stood transfixed, for in the dimness and the stillness beady little eyes would have looked at him piercingly through holes in the wainscoting, eyes

whose owners had been disturbed by his footfall as they sat nibbling crusts and crumbs on the now vacant tables.

The writer saw these merry marauders on several occasions, and for size and shape they would have won prizes in any open rat competition. Rumour had it that these midnight visitors were so tame that several of them came to Mr. Flowerdew when he called them by name. However, this of course may be a slight exaggeration, as Mark Twain remarked on a famous occasion.

In mentioning the plain cooking served at Simpson's, with the exception of the few very smart hotels where the demand for French dishes and made-up kickshaws were only just becoming fashionable, chefs were content to allow fish, fowl and good red-herring to taste like fish, fowl and good red-herring, and did not seek to conjure up sauces and condiments from the vasty deep for the purpose of puzzling the unsophisticated diner. However, when Mr. Ritz and his friend Mr. Escoffier flashed themselves upon London, they taught their disciples, who thought as a rule only in terms of "roast" or "boiled," that the creation of the gourmet was not possible unless beef and mutton were raised to the culinary peerage by having "*à la*" written after their names.

As an example of how by no means difficult to please the dining public was in the early Nineties, a sensation was caused in London when Monsieur Joseph, the noted French restaurateur, was persuaded to leave Paris for a month to come to the Savoy and show England what *Duck à la Presse*, the dish he had invented, was really like, and also to persuade the West End that the flavour of the strawberry was brought out to the full by adding a few drops of vinegar to his crimson syrup, which he described in poetic prose. He arrived from France with six attendants, who assisted him to give a perfect exhibition of his art in public, part of his performance when cooking a duck being to further insult the poor bird by squeezing even its bones to a pulp in a silver press after having dismembered it with an ease and elegance which even an abdominal Harley Street specialist would have envied. Woe betide any absentminded lady or gentleman who put salt or pepper on his creation, for when this happened, with a snarl of disgust he waved to his attendants to make the offenders pay the penalty of their—to him—vulgar ignorance by depriving them of their entire helping. An autocrat was Monsieur Joseph, with the face of an actor who would have cast himself for the part of

Voltaire, and the antics and showmanship of a Pachmann. Indeed, if his ducks had been pianos he might have rivalled that eccentric master.

Of the small cheap eating-houses in the Strand, the two best known for the quality of their fare was one that rejoiced in the name of Peace and Plenty, and another called Loveridge's. Outside the latter, a various assortment of meat and game was always displayed to entice the passer-by, consisting usually of a haunch of venison, some hares and rabbits, and often a roe deer, a label with the price of a portion of each of these delicacies being pinned upon them. A B C shops were greatly patronized by those whose purses only allowed them to consider coffee and a bun or scones for lunch, and these had no competition, as Messrs. Lyons & Company had not then become famous, although the founder of the firm, Joseph Lyons, afterwards Sir Joseph, in 1887 had a small fried-fish shop no great distance from the Whitechapel Theatre. A very popular and charitable man was Joe Lyons, ever ready to assist the needy or a deserving cause. He well merited his success, and made no secret of the fact that he looked upon the Trocadero Restaurant, built on the site of the Old Trocadero Music Hall, as his Crowning Triumph.

"Oh, for a life in Bohemia, Frolic and Feast and Fun," so sang Paul Rubens—a brilliant composer of light music, a writer of merry librettos, and a lyrist whose verse was always neat, witty and had a quaintness all its own. Alas! this charming personality sighed for a kingdom of which he was destined to know little, as at the end of the Nineties the real Bohemians for whom yesterday and to-morrow have never existed, were like the Assyrian Host, withered and strewn. It is true a goodly sprinkling of the reckless and devil-me-care lads and lasses of the middle Eighties remained and lingered far into the days when he came up from Oxford, but he was young and they were marching towards a setting sun.

Still, if they no longer indulged in Frolic, the last of the Bohemians managed to Feast and knock a considerable amount of Fun out of Life. They were all members of the Pelican and Barn Clubs and used them a great deal, but these "characters" made the "House of The Roman" their principal place of call, for there their lady friends invariably lunched, dined and supped.

There may be such types about to-day as they were, but it is to be doubted, and if they do exist they are as rare as a First Folio or Chinese Chippendale.

To mention only a few of these happy-go-lucky and delightful individuals, there were Arthur Roberts, a comedian of outstanding genius; Ivan Caryll, a Belgian by birth, whose real name was Tilkyn and who always thought he was speaking perfect English when he referred to his delightful melodies as "may music"; Walter Pallant of the Stock Exchange, a power behind the Gaiety throne, for he had a grand sense of humour, was a great picker of songs, and was generally to be seen with George Edwardes, the wizard-like manager of that unique theatre; Walter Dickson and Swish Broadwood, both of them the legitimate successors of Jim Selby, the most famous whip in coaching history; Barney Barnato, a character of characters and the founder of a great firm; Woolf Joel his nephew, an extraordinarily pleasant man, who was shot by a ruffian called Von Woltheim in Johannesburg; Dickie Dunn, the King of Bookmakers, who would lay the odds to thousands as unconcernedly as a hen would lay an egg; Charlie Mills, the biggest commission agent of his day; Charles Hawtreys, Lord Mandeville, Harry Preston, and those inseparables Arthur Binstead and Willie Goldberg, the immortal Pitcher and Shifter of the *Pink'un*; Bill Jardley, who had hit more balls out of every cricket ground than any other man in England; Lieutenant-Colonel Newnham Davis, and a host of others whose names if catalogued would fill a book.

Colonel Davis was a good-natured, kindly soul who wrote for the *Sporting Times* and signed his articles "The Dwarf of Blood." In remembering this quaint name by which he was known, one cannot help recalling the story of a stage-struck carpenter. Forgiveness is asked that in the telling a swear word is used, and I am confident it will be granted, as a laugh of the Nineties, or from anywhere else, is valuable in these hectic days. The man, Bill Ramsden by name, was the stage carpenter at the old Grand Theatre, Islington, the one regret of his life being that he had never gone on the stage. At last, however, he was given the chance he had waited for so long. On the morning of the pantomime to be produced for the first time that night, the Demon King was taken gravely ill, and the producers, at their wits' end to find a substitute at such short notice, suddenly thought of a

way out of their dilemma. They sent for Bill and said, "Look here, we have cut the part of the Demon King down to one line, and we want you, as you are a big man and will fit the clothes, to come up a trap and say, 'Ha! Ha! I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood.'" Bill, overjoyed, said he could do it on his head, and would be proud to do a bit of acting. During the rest of the day he walked about rehearsing to himself and trying to find varied readings to make his delineation, although not a long one, an original creation. "*I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood,*" he thought would be good—but altered this to "*I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood.*" Then he felt "*I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood*" would be better—but was not sure that "*I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood*" would not be more effective. But at last he decided that "*I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood*" was the real way of delivering this terrifying announcement. Nervous, excited and perspiring, he kept on for hours repeating "*I am the Demon Dwarf of Blood.*" Night came; beneath the stage he waited on the trap. Thunder, lightning and red fire heralded the coming of this frightening apparition. At last the word was given—and being shot up on to the stage he confronted the House, packed to suffocation. He stood for a moment dazed, and, losing his head completely, shouted, "Ha! Ha! I am the bloody Demon Dwarf!!!"

There are few things more irritating than to read long stories of ordinary mortals one has never known, and so at the first blush, looking at the names mentioned here, one may appear to be guilty of boring the reader. On second thoughts, however, it is hoped that this will not be the case, for their owners, although they all booked single tickets long ago on that train that stops at many stations but has only one terminus, are strangely near us to-day, as much of the work they have left for our delight is still as fresh as when the public took it to their hearts nearly fifty years ago.

Leslie Stuart, for instance, haunts us with his "Little Dolly Daydream," his "Lily of Laguna" and "Louisiana Loo," his score of "Floradora" and many other wonderful melodies which helped to make famous Eugene Stratton, Ellaline Terriss and a dozen other stars of the Nineties. Constantly we hear Lionel Monckton in every ballroom with his songs from "The Shop Girl," "The Circus Girl," and the dozens of delightful compositions which were the outstanding features of numerous Gaiety and Daly's Theatre

successes. "Lally," as he was called by his intimates, was in himself by no means as merry as his music, but his judgment was unerring as to the value of a lyric, which, once chosen, he set and re-set until he was entirely satisfied. He had the good fortune to marry Miss Gertie Millar, afterwards the Countess of Dudley, who, inimitable artist though she was, had much to thank him for professionally.

Caryll, a musician of a more virile and dashing school (for Monckton was always proud to declare that he sat at the feet of Arthur Sullivan), wrote music with a lilt and Continental swing about it which to-day breathes vitality into the souls of the modern convalescent somnambulists who are under the impression that they are dancing with all the enthusiasm of the Italian army in retreat. Apropos of this, two great men, the late Lord Balfour and Monsieur Clemenceau, when asked as they watched the new style of ballroom dancing what they thought of it, each made amusing replies. The former after a pause said, "They look to me like a couple going for a country walk who are not on speaking terms," while the latter observed that "Their faces are very sad, but their behinds look extremely gay!"

It may be of interest to the present generation to visualize the five master melody-makers who contributed so much to the gaiety of the town. Never were there five types so different as Caryll, Monckton, Rubens, Leslie Stuart and Sydney Jones. Caryll, always immaculately dressed—with his fierce moustache and beard cut and trimmed in the style beloved of the princely Russians of stage and story—lived like a millionaire. On the box of his victoria or brougham there were always two men (he would have had three if there had been room), and his carriages were of the most up-to-date type drawn by pairs of magnificent chestnuts. Charminglly extravagant, the very best was hardly good enough for him. He had no idea of the value of money, and when he died suddenly in New York, having travelled from England in a suite de luxe with his family and servants, it was discovered that he only had £17 in ready money in his pocket-book and that his banking account was practically nil. He was a good companion, always full of enthusiasm even about things that did not matter, and his death robbed the theatre of an incurable optimist.

Paul Rubens, dark of complexion, slight and delicate in appear-

ance, had great charm, and in spite of phenomenal success when almost a boy, remained totally unspoiled.

Lionel Monckton, prematurely bald, tall and severe to look at, made few friends and seemed to get more amusement out of pulling his moustache than any other man of his time.

Leslie Stuart was a small, dapper, fair-haired little fellow, always slightly more of his native Manchester than of London. Like Caryll, he took a delight in entertaining all and sundry, and it was owing to his over-generous nature that he died with little or no money.

Sydney Jones, who wrote success after success and whose scholarly and tuneful music was the backbone of every score with which his name was associated, knew little of Bohemia and, I think, had no desire to burn its midnight oil.

Wise in his generation, being an outdoor man, he had early realized that to stand beside the rushing waters of the high-banked Spey and listen to its music as he gazed upon the monarch of the pool lying vanquished at his feet, was better by far than seeing the scion of a noble house on a silver dish tricked out with drooping parsley and a fifty-shilling suit of shoddy mayonnaise.

Quiet, sound and certain, Sydney Jones was as little like the popular idea of a musician as were either of his great contemporaries, Sir Edward Elgar or Sir Arthur Sullivan, for in appearance the former looked like a gentle country squire, while the latter, a sallow-complexioned little man of immense charm, might easily have been mistaken for a distinguished foreigner visiting our shores.

Sir Edward German's contribution to the theatre must not be overlooked, for the music he composed for Irving's never-surpassed production of "Henry the Eighth" was the first popular triumph of a brilliant career. His dances live to-day as fresh as when, upon that memorable night, William Terriss, as that King of England who so unblushingly made Holy Church a party to his amorous excursions, trod a measure with a new-found love and under the approving eye of an almost over-loyal Cardinal whispered to Anne Boleyn, "Oh, Beauty, till now I never knew thee." His delightful setting of "Merrie England" was a joy, and his incidental music for "Richard III" is the most magnificent ever written from a dramatic point of view, for not only do its marches breathe the tumult of Bosworth's field, but the eeriness

of its themes which surround the supernatural and the impending dangers of the Tower frame Shakespeare's verse with the majesty demanded by a period of Royal conflict.

However, to return to the habitués of Romano's, that merry place which Sydney Jones may perhaps have visited now and again during rehearsal time, but which Elgar and Sullivan I am sure never entered: how gladly one remembers Jimmy Davis. A most likeable little Jew, he was a provocative journalist and the writer of many successful librettos. He made money with his right hand and gave it away with his left; and, never being out of financial difficulties, all of which he laughed off, nothing amused him more than to show his guests the smoking-room of his country house at Winkfield, which he had had papered with writs. He was one of a brilliant family, for his sister, Mrs. Frankau, wrote successfully under the name of Frank Danby, and, witty as her brother, her charm endeared her to everyone who knew her. Her son is the world-famous author, Gilbert Frankau, of to-day, while her sister, the late Mrs. Aria, an extraordinarily clever woman, was a devoted friend of the great Henry Irving in his later years, and helped him with her sympathy and comforted him greatly in the trials which befell him in his old age.

A sharp tongue had James Davis, and among the many good things to his credit was his remark to a theatrical manager who owed him a large sum of money for his fees as an author. After a long and somewhat heated argument, being unable to obtain any satisfaction whatever, he cut short the conversation by saying, "Oh, my dear fellow, you're impossible. I don't believe that even Cinquevalli could balance your accounts."

Cinquevalli, let it be explained, as an equilibrist was in a class by himself, being one of the most highly paid music-hall attractions during the late Eighties and onwards for many a year, having invented a trick which no other performer has ever dared to attempt. This was the placing of a cannon-ball upon the end of a billiard cue, balancing them both on his chin and then, knocking the cue away, catching the cannon-ball on the nape of his neck. Had he misjudged its fall by a fraction he would have been a dead man.

Jimmy, a very alive little night-bird, was seldom scored off,

but on one occasion Isaacs, a well-known dog-fancier and purveyor of cats and other domestic pets, succeeded in leaving him completely nonplussed. The famous Miss Letty Lind, a divine person both on and off the stage, one day expressed a wish to become the possessor of a really good Persian tom-cat. At once large-hearted James rushed off to Isaacs and paid fifty pounds for the best one procurable.

"You've got a bargain," said Isaacs. "This was the prize tom-cat at the Crystal Palace Show."

A few weeks afterwards, however, it gave birth to six kittens in Miss Lind's drawing-room. Furious at the trick that had been played upon him, Davis rushed round to the dealer's shop and said, "Isaacs, you've swindled me. Miss Lind's tom-cat has had kittens."

"What has he had?" said Isaacs.

"Kittens," screamed Mr. Davis. "What have you to say?"

"Say?" said Isaacs, throwing up his hands in ecstasy. "All I can say is, that she's got the living wonder of the world."

It is impossible to believe that any low comedian who ever lived had a greater gift of repartee or was such a master of impromptu as Arthur Roberts. In the theatre or out of it he was perfectly incorrigible, and to say that he "champagned" three generations of the Jeunesse Dorée—whom he christened the Jeunesse Stage Dooré—under the turf is no exaggeration. Night after night and year after year he twined Ibsen's vine leaves in his hair, but being blessed with the constitution of an ox he was as bright as a new pin on the following morning when all his companions of a none too roseate dawn were suffering from what is known as a well-earned "hangover." A great theatre star in the Nineties, he was as alert for many years in the present century as a lad of five-and-twenty, and was the *enfant terrible* of the Town. Though no doubt at times it must be presumed that he went to bed, he certainly never did so till daybreak, after having been the life and soul of every party he was at—and the Nineties being the years in which the South African Boom made poor men rich and gamblers millionaires, London was always a nightly riot of entertaining after the theatre.

His was a quicksilver mind that missed nothing. It was Arthur Roberts who, while convalescing at Folkestone, in an absolutely empty hotel, on seeing an old gentleman with a beard sitting alone under a palm in the lounge, walked up to him and said,

"Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" As an example of his quickness the following is by no means a bad specimen of rapid thinking: Driving to the funeral of a bookmaker with whom he had recently gone racing at Hurst Park, a friend in the same carriage asked him the name of the cemetery they were in. "Oh!" replied Roberts. "Hearse Park."

As a singer of songs he had few equals. As a grotesque he stood alone. As a pantomimist he was Debureau come to life. His repartee was lightning-like, and even as an old man he never lost this, his greatest stock-in-trade.

When well over seventy, rehearsing for a revue, the author, a bumptious fellow who should have had respect for a great figure in the evening of his days, was somewhat annoyed that Roberts seemed slightly imperfect in his lines, and called out, "Really, Mr. Roberts, you seem to have lost your memory."

"Indeed?" replied Roberts. "Looking at your manuscript, you don't seem to have lost yours."

And what could have been quicker than his retort courteous, as they say, to his manager at the dress rehearsal of a musical comedy called "H.M.S. Irresponsible"? He had dined far too well and had been very difficult to deal with all the evening. The climax came when, having to appear as an Admiral in the second act, he did so with his uniform buttoned up anyhow and wearing a panama instead of a cocked hat. The poor man who had the burden of the whole production on his shoulders, unable to control his temper any longer, shouted out, "Mr. Roberts, look at your clothes! And you've got your sword on the wrong side."

"Have I?" said our friend. "Then turn the ship round."

Ernest Benzon who was an habitu  of Romano's was known as "The Jubilee Juggins," owing to the fact that he betted so recklessly that he was the means of sending more book-makers' wives and children for their summer holidays than any punter of his day. He was very much of a ridiculous figure, sadly lacking in the judgment attributed to Solomon, and having run through a large fortune, ended his career at a small hotel in Jersey, living there on an allowance of ten pounds a week given him by his relatives on condition that his old haunts knew him no more. It has been said that "there are two sorts of mugs in the world—one that you put something into and the other that you take something out of." Alas, poor Benzon! The greatest

fly flat of his generation, his besetting sin was a good-natured vanity which prompted him to imagine that he was the most knowledgeable of all gamblers connected with every form of sport. Indeed, so certain was he of this that even at billiards he felt himself to be unbeatable, and being heartily encouraged in his belief by the most dangerous of all players, those who carry chalk in their pockets, he found himself one night locked in a billiard-room with some of The Criterion Boys, to whom, by breakfast-time, he had lost ten thousand golden sovereigns.

While in the Nineties one never heard of vast estates changing hands on the turn of a card as so often happened when Brummell and D'Orsay patronized Crockford's, yet there were many who gambled very heavily on the Turf. Charles Mills, for instance, a most popular man in racing circles, once lost nine-and-twenty thousand pounds on a race, and contrariwise he was known to have won fifty thousand on an animal that was out for the first time. Like the real sportsman he was, he put back his race-glasses into their case, on both occasions, without the flicker of an eyelid.

An inveterate card-player was a Jew with the not uncommon name of Cohen, who, leaving Romano's with a party one night after supper to gamble at his flat in Piccadilly, played until nine in the morning and lost a fortune. When the said Cohen walked out into the street he did so ruined, his only assets being the clothes he stood up in. He had staked the contents of his abode, which was full of very beautiful furniture and valuable pictures, on a last and losing hand.

It is also a fact that a well-known nobleman about this time lost some five-and-twenty thousand pounds in one evening to a plausible sharper, who afterwards went to gaol for fraud; but as His Grace is happily still alive he shall be nameless, as also must be the identity of an extremely well-known man of the world who lost thirty-three thousand pounds at piquet to his brother. They played all the way on a journey from Victoria to the Gare du Nord.

This is surely proof enough that the nineteenth-century Corinthians were men of mettle and were no less devil-may-care at play than their predecessors.

In thinking of games requiring skill and cunning as well as luck, it was in the late Eighties that Poker became generally popular in England, when Americans, many having acquired the

habit of visiting our shores each season, introduced us to their national game of cards. While it never found its way into the really smart clubs or the homes of those whose names were to be met with in Debrett, it was all the rage in the Nineties with the class of gambler who plays not for amusement but simply to make money and is always ready to pit his knowledge of the art of bluff against those likewise inclined. Though most people were well aware that there could be no more dangerous game to play with strangers than Poker, still, Englishmen going to and from New York were constantly being fleeced by American crooks who made a living on the big liners. These knights of the smoking-room were charmingly natural persons with quiet manners, usually working as a party of four apparently ordinary business men quite unknown to each other. To-day they are practically non-existent, as so many passengers lost considerable sums of money on every trip, that the Steamship Companies were at last obliged to take steps to protect an unsuspecting public. (The largest ocean-going steamers, such as the *Britannic* and *Germanic*, were of 6000 tons; and when the *City of Paris*, of 10,000 tons, made the passage from Queenstown to New York in six days, the world was definitely certain that this was the biggest and fastest ship which could or ever would be built.)

Though in all games of chance it is obvious that there need be no limit to the stakes, still it is highly improbable that the initial penalties for each player before betting on his hand have ever been greater than those recorded in the Nineties when a game of Poker was played by five men in London, four of whom were multi-millionaires. It was a game of five hundred pounds Jackpots and five hundred pounds to come in. For the benefit of the uninitiated let it be explained that the Jackpot is the pool, and that to "come in" means that after the player has looked at his cards, if he thinks them good enough to draw to he must pay another five hundred pounds to play the hand. This particular game began at ten o'clock at night and lasted till seven the next morning, and though at times the betting was extremely high, when the players rose it was found that the losses totalled only some eighteen thousand pounds, a negligible amount when one considers that if all five men decided to play their hands there was five thousand pounds on the table before they began betting.

A well-known sportsman, who died in 1902, accumulated

quite a considerable sum of money by always laying the odds against Rumour or Hearsay. He was known as "10 to 1 Bradley" for the reason that he made a practice of betting 10 to 1 against any fact or story he considered doubtful. Therefore if someone said definitely that Jones had run away with Smith's wife, or that the Derby favourite had been scratched, or that the Portuguese were declaring war on China, he would invariably lay the odds—and he generally won, which goes to show that he was right when he said that not a quarter of anything one hears second-hand is true.

Walter Dickson and Swish Broadwood, sportsmen who frequented Romano's, were two of the best whips in England. They drove for pleasure, and one or the other was often to be seen on the box of the Brighton coach when it started on a summer's morning from Hatchett's. It is said that their post-horns are no longer heard making the music of the shires in Piccadilly, for their teams looked pictures and it was a jolly sight to watch the passers-by lift their hats to the "four-in-hand," as was the time-honoured old English custom, and to see the driver acknowledge the salute by raising the butt of his whip to his chin and, well pleased at the courtesy he had received, proceed to flip a fly off the leader's ear. Walter Dickson was known as Dicky the Driver. A director of the Empire Theatre, and a wholesale butcher by trade, he was one of the most popular men in Bohemian London; and being an inveterate night-bird, constantly went to Smithfield Market in his dress clothes to deal, at five in the morning, with the huge consignments of meat under his control.

A strange contrast were these two men. "The Driver" was fat and jolly as a sandboy (though I don't know what a sandboy is, and if there is such a thing, why he should be particularly jolly at having anything to do with sand), while Broadwood, a gentleman of leisure, was tall, smart, hard-bitten and had so much of the stable about him that had a tame racehorse followed him into a restaurant no one would have expressed the slightest surprise. He had the most amazing flow of language, but was a real good sort and meant no harm. Indeed, I am quite sure that he was unaware that the swear words with which he peppered the Queen's English were not used by dons at Oxford and Canterbury divines. Outspoken to a degree, a spade to him was always "something else of a spade," and as he never gave an imitation of a seaside landlady by mincing matters he must have somewhat surprised

the clergyman who called on him asking for a subscription of five pounds towards buying oak with which to panel the chancel of his church. "What?" shouted Swish. "A fiver to buy oak? Not me, my buck, but I'll tell you what I *will* do. I'll give you a tenner to buy rope to hang the damn fellow who rings your blasted bells at eight o'clock every Sunday morning." If the reader will think of a few adjectives, sprinkle them on the foregoing and stir gently, it may be understood why the pastor fled in terror, though those who knew our coaching friend may be quite sure that he sent the worthy ecclesiastic the five pounds he had asked for, and probably a bit more for luck.

In remembering the gallants of the Nineties, one of the most attractive young men who was the gayest of the gay at this time was the Hon. Claude Lowther, nephew of Lord Lonsdale. Always faultlessly attired, he entertained his friends like the Grand Seigneur he was throughout his life. His perfect manners were those of the beaux of an earlier period, and he possessed a wit to match them.

With an income that permitted him to enjoy himself in every way, he never hesitated to embark on all kinds of adventures if the spirit moved him. Sometimes, in company with a few of his very exclusive set, he would suddenly make up his mind to leave London after dinner in his dress clothes and catch the night express for Paris, where he had a charming apartment. A more virile or fearless person never lived, and in spite of his love of all that was beautiful in art and his delight in the many pleasures that the world holds, when the Boer War broke out he not only laughed his way to the South African battlefields but fought there so valiantly that without doubt, had it been possible, he should have been given the Victoria Cross. Bravely he led two parties across a bullet-swept plain in an endeavour to try and recover the body of Lord Roberts's son, and when these attempts failed, although nearly all who went with him were either killed or wounded, nothing daunted he called for volunteers to face again almost certain death. On this last sally, of the ten men who followed him only two besides himself returned.

Another lifelong friend and amusing type of the writer's youth was Lord Dungarvon, known to his intimates as "Sol," who,

having very decided and often unorthodox views on life, carried off the many escapades in which he indulged with an Irish charm that the most daring of the old Corinthians would have envied. One of the most lovable qualities of the popular Sol was that he never hesitated to say, when asked, exactly what he thought, but unfortunately it was this very quality of honesty which lost him a fortune in his later years.

He was the heir of his kinsman, the late Lord Clanricarde. This eccentric old gentleman, whose wealth was estimated, I think, at some two million pounds or more, had rooms in the Albany, where he lived, if not as an absolute miser, as good an imitation of one as a man in his position could well be. In his apartments were hung priceless pictures, while many more were stacked against the walls or laid face downwards on the floors. Almost shabby in appearance, he made a practice, whenever fine, of walking into the Green Park to lunch off a packet of sandwiches. He saw few people and entertained none, and it was only on very rare occasions that he and Dungarvon ever met. One afternoon it happened that Sol, walking into a dealer's shop at Guildford, chanced to see a picture of one of his ancestors. It was a fine portrait, and though by no means a rich man, he immediately purchased it, the price running into four figures. Thinking that it would please the old man, he had it packed and gave orders that it should be sent to Lord Clanricarde's London address. A week later he received an acknowledgment from the Albany thanking him for the gift, but drawing his attention to the fact that there had been 7s. 6d. carriage to pay on it. Dungarvon, astonished and somewhat disgusted, took no notice of the letter. A fortnight passed, and another note arrived pointing out that the 7s. 6d. not having been sent, Clanricarde would be glad to receive it by return. Again Dungarvon ignored what he considered incredible meanness. Time passed, and the recluse of the Albany, London, W., wrote again, asking Dungarvon what he meant by not having sent a postal order for the amount. On receiving this, Sol, hot-headed Irishman that he was, instead of realizing that Clanricarde was so eccentric that he was not to be judged as a normal human being, sat down and wrote a long epistle telling him in no unqualified terms exactly what he thought of him. The result was that strange old Clanricarde cut him out of his will and left his vast fortune elsewhere.

This story may or may not have been absolutely true, but it went the rounds and must have had some foundation in fact.

Dungarvon himself, a regular character, had amongst other peculiarities a curious habit of spluttering and making strange noises when he talked, punctuating his sentences by saying, "What, eh, what?", so that when he returned from a cruise it was said that he had chosen the Canaries for a holiday so as to acquire some new tunes. His quick temper often landed him into difficulties, and on one occasion, getting into an altercation with a policeman in the early hours of the morning, and the guardian of the law threatening to take him to Bow Street Police Station, he said, much to the amusement of his friends, "I refuse to go to Bow Street. Take me to Marlborough Street, I much prefer it. What, eh, what?"

To most men the loss of a couple of millions or more would have been a knock-down blow, but not to His Lordship. He meant what he had written, and wild horses would not have made him retract a word, even if the apology had resulted in all being forgiven and forgotten.

In direct contrast to the foregoing unfortunate happening, the story of how a young Guardsman, Mr. Harry McCalmont, living on four hundred a year, became a millionaire, is by no means uninteresting.

Standing in the Park one afternoon, watching the crowd who were cheering Mr. Gladstone as he drove by, an old gentleman walked up to this youthful soldier and enquired what he thought of "The Grand Old Man"—the name by which the public knew the then Prime Minister.

"Not much," replied Harry McCalmont. "You sec, I happen to be a staunch Conservative."

"Oh, don't you?" said the old gentleman. "Let me tell you that you are too young to pass an opinion on so great a national figure."

"Really?" replied the stripling. "And who may you be, sir?" To which the old gentleman answered, "I am your uncle, Hugh McCalmont," and turning on his heel walked away.

Harry McCalmont, never having seen him before and never expecting to see him again, was surprised a week later, on hearing a knock at the door of his small flat in Victoria Street, to find his Uncle Hugh on the doorstep. The old man looked round the

three not very elaborately furnished rooms occupied by his nephew, and after a pause enquired, rather testily, "Why on earth do you live on the fourth floor?"

"Because I can't afford to live on the first," was the reply.

Little more was said, and the old man, refusing the tea he was offered, bid his young relative good-bye.

Some months later, Mr. McCalmont received a solicitor's letter couched in the most polite terms informing him of his uncle's death and particularly requesting that after the funeral, which he was asked to attend, he would go to 11 St. James's Square, there to hear the contents of the old man's will.

This he did. The reading of an extremely long document commenced, to which he listened with very little interest until suddenly he heard the words "and to my nephew, Henry McCalmont, I leave my gold watch." Thinking that it was extraordinarily kind of his relative to have remembered him, he sat back, well content, wondering how much longer it would be before he could leave, when again he heard his name and noticed that everyone in the room turned to stare at him. The words he heard were: "and to my said nephew, Henry McCalmont, I leave my freehold residence, Number 11 St. James's Square, and my house and lands known as Chieveley." He was so absolutely dumbfounded that he failed to catch the last six words which followed this momentous announcement.

The reading being over, he was quite at a loss to understand why everyone present came forward to congratulate him, including his uncle's solicitors, who with a certain degree of deference ventured to hope that the Firm might continue to act for him as for years and years it had done for their deceased client.

Rather worried, and unable to think how he could possibly be expected to keep up a big town house and a large estate on four hundred a year, he drove down Piccadilly to the Wellington Club to review the unexpected situation. On coming out half an hour later he hailed a hansom, and was driving towards Victoria Street when he heard the newspaper boy rushing about shouting, "Millionaire Guardsman! Millionaire Guardsman!" Wondering which of his brother officers this could be, he stopped the cab, bought a paper, and found that the millionaire was himself.

The words in his uncle's will which had followed "known as Chieveley" and which he, in his excitement, had not heard were:

"and the residue of my estate"—six words which made him one of the richest men in England.

But here it would be well to call a halt, if only for a moment, and cease to make personalities of paramount importance. Nothing would be easier than to ramble on and write about many well-known characters who reigned in a Bohemia which has long since ceased to be, but as we are concerned, although perhaps only mildly, with a Time rather than with potted biographies, it is wise to refrain from inviting ghosts to don once again their white dress ties and seat themselves in the Banquet Hall of Memory, where lights that once shone brilliantly are, maybe, for the moderns only guttering tapers in tarnished candelabras. We strain our ears to catch the echo of a song, the wit of good companions, or the charm of gentle women, and though these are by no means easy of recapture, when for a moment they live again they are, more often than not, of doubtful value in that they breed comparison, which has for ever been the enemy of real happiness.

Alike, and yet so much unlike, the Nineties and the Nineteen Forties in their modes and manners are blood relations and are not periods of such violent transitions as were every previous decade of our Island history. Eighteenth-century powder and brocade had surrendered to boot and buskin, this in its turn to the crinolines of Frith and the formal tails of early Dickens, these to the established broadcloth of that sad hour when an immortal pen fell from the Master's stricken hand. Then came the Eighties, fighting beaver, cape and pegtop to settle down at last for well-nigh half a century to the basic tweed tailoring of to-day. Therefore, as one can be quite definite in saying that neither clothes nor custom differed to any great extent in the waning years of good Queen Victoria from those of her great-grandson's day, so one can be equally sure that the real difference between them was the atmosphere in which the Edwardians lived, an atmosphere of certainty created by the tranquillity of a past and the unclouded horizon of the future. Our grandsires were carefree folk, who lived happily ignorant of what the future held in store for their children; had it been possible to foreshadow such tragedy, they would have voted it the fantastic workings of a diseased mind. Their blessings indeed were so many that they were left uncounted. Britain was Mistress

of the Seas, her supremacy unchallenged, her word the deciding factor in the Councils of the World, her National Debt no burden but a proof of strength. The economic Ship of State sailed on an even keel, and so, pensions, savings and the future of the individual being safe, the labourer, after the midday toil, looked forward with confidence to the evening calm as his by right. These, then, surely are the years for which no label should be written other than one which bears upon its face the words Peace and Contentment.

It was in the Vintage Years that the Jews as a community were becoming a great power in the land, for at this time England owed much to such princes of finance as the Cassels, the Behrens, the Sassoons, the Hirschs, the Sterns, the Seligmans, and many other distinguished members of a race which from time immemorial has given to the world creative genius in every branch of art and science. For upwards of a century the mighty house of Rothschild had not only never failed our country, but time and again had thrown its weight into the scales when instant decision or vital necessity demanded it. In remembering power that has never been misused, and those whose vision and foresight helped to make London doubly secure as the clearing-house of the world, it is small wonder that the British people, perhaps more than any other, have given their hearts to Jewry in its hour of trial and suffering, and watched with horror and indignation the unspeakable cruelty to which it has been subjected.

There is no nation without its scum, no multitude of men without its quota of the unscrupulous who seek to trample their weaker brethren underfoot by substituting cunning for cleverness to gain their ends, and in these hours of misery and confusion it would be well if the unthinking paused to remember this, for they would then hold out the hand of friendship if ever it were needed to a race the majority of whom have proved themselves to be generous, sympathetic and helpful to many a man and woman on whose shoulders bitter blows have fallen.

Usurers as a class are foul and about the last people one would describe as being either decent or reputable persons, yet Sam Lewis, the king of moneylenders in those days, was highly respected and well liked by everyone with whom he did business.

He started life by hawking cheap jewellery in Birmingham; then he came to London and amassed a huge fortune by allowing

the nobility and gentry to handle portions of his capital for brief periods on terms quite unknown to those who stabilize the bank rate. However, although the interest he charged was high, he was never known to resort to shady tricks. On the contrary, he often did many a kindly act to clients who were honestly in distress and were unable to carry out their bargain with him to the letter. His holidays were all spent at Monte Carlo or Ostend, where, although there was no more astute financier in his own particular line, he was one of the unluckiest gamblers imaginable and consistently lost large sums of money at roulette or *chemin de fer*.

He was a quaint-looking little man, with a good sense of humour, and a close-cropped black beard. At his first meeting with a client he made a point of always saying, "Have a cigar." This he did not from motives of generosity but to test the honesty of his client. When asked to explain, with a twinkle in his eye he could reply, "Well, you see, in my left-hand waistcoat pocket I keep the worst Havanas possible, and they never fail to tell me what I want to know. If a man accepts one of them and gets through a third of it without throwing it in the fire I know that I am dealing either with an absolute idiot or a gentleman of inordinate cunning. The fool I pity, but the cunning one must be considered very carefully, for any man who can offer up his stomach on the altar of his needs must be in such dire financial difficulties that his word is the last thing that should ever be taken from him."

A great judge of character, he was known to have advanced large sums on simply a verbal promise to repay. That he was robbed on more than one occasion by clients of birth and breeding, who had laid themselves open to criminal proceedings by having signed declarations as to their real position, was discovered after his death, but to his lasting credit let it be set down that, having discovered he had been swindled, he was content if his original loan was repaid, and never once took proceedings which would have brought ruin and disgrace on the innocent relatives of unscrupulous people. It was not his method to trap the unwary, a thing which most usurers delight in doing, and his answer to a younger son of rich parents who came to him in trouble might well have been written as his epitaph. It was this: "My boy, the interest I should ask you, you could not afford to pay, and the interest you would offer is no use to me. So I will not lend you

a penny, but here is a hundred pounds. I give it to you as a present, and if ever I hear of your going to moneylenders—and I am sure to—I shall tell your father.”

He was by no means the class of Jew who made a boast of having put Christians on their feet by taking away their motor-cars.

It was little Sam Lewis who, becoming extremely bored with sight-seeing while on a holiday in Italy with his wife and a party of friends, left them without warning in Rome and proceeded to Monte Carlo alone, where he at once started to enjoy himself at the tables. The telegram he sent his lady consisted of only four words; they were, “You can have Rome!”

A story that illustrates his extraordinary shrewdness is told of him when on a visit to Margate. He was sauntering down a back street in that once restful seaside resort when, chancing to look through a dingy lodging-house window, he saw a blue china vase on the mantelpiece of the furnished sitting-room. He immediately rang the bell, and after enquiring as to the possibility of obtaining apartments and finding this to be out of the question, he asked the old woman who kept the place if she would be willing to sell the house and everything in it for a thousand pounds. Unable to believe her ears, she accepted the princely offer on the spot, and everything being in order and the bargain concluded, she left her shabby abode the happiest woman in the world. A few days later, Mr. Lewis, to her astonishment, made her a present of the house and all that was in it with the exception of the blue china ornament which had attracted his attention. It was, as he had known it to be, a priceless piece of Chinese porcelain, which he sold to a London dealer for an enormous sum.

It is generally supposed that Jews like stories told against themselves, but one can be very sure that this is a popular fallacy. It may be that some of them are not averse to conveying this impression, but if the truth be told, it would be found to be only the protective armour of a sensitive people. It is true that many of the most amusing stories are those with which their names are coupled, and when these are inoffensive, why should they not join in a hearty laugh? One, although it is of the Vintage Years, is worth remembering. Its hero was a wealthy Hebrew who administered a well-earned rebuke to a girl who was serving in a West End fruiterer's shop. Having seen a pear, he enquired of the smiling blonde who had served him the price. To his amaze-

ment, he was told seven shillings and sixpence. "Fancy that!" he sighed, as he handed Miss Platinum half a sovereign. "Pretty expensive, isn't it?" "Oh, don't say that, sir," she lisped. "Thank you, sir—here's your change, half a crown." "No," he said. "You'd better keep that; I trod on a grape as I came in!!!"

To show how the ruling passion is strong, even when just having escaped death, a story is told of two Jewish stockbrokers one of whom had saved the other from drowning. He had dived in as his friend was disappearing for the third time, and after holding him up for five minutes turned him on his back and said, "There you are, now can you float alone?" The answer he received was, "Don't talk business at a time like this!!!"

Much has been written about the National Sporting Club of the Nineties, the Home of British Boxing. It is much to be regretted that a dwelling which was so much part of sixteenth-century London is now a fruit-merchant's store—where history is "very small potatoes" and the Great only green vegetables. Many are the vicissitudes through which the original house has passed, for in addition to having been the town residence of the Earl of Sterling, it has been a hotel known as the Star, and not so very very long before our "Vintage Years" was a music hall to which a Mr. Evans gave his name.

If there be such things as ghosts anxious to revisit this land of promises so seldom fulfilled, what a varied assortment of wraiths could stroll casually through each other before cock-crow at Number 43; and if there are such things as *Genial Ghosts*, they would no doubt become very chatty after imbibing the scented emptiness of once flowing bowls. What stories could not the nobleman and the jockey, the prize-fighter and the playwright, the clergy and the laity, and all sorts and conditions of men exchange as for the first time they told each other the real truth. Probably Sheridan would be heard relating how the original manuscript of the "School for Scandal" was lost, and that to recover the text it became necessary that all the actors who had appeared in the first production were recalled from various parts of England, Scotland and Ireland to repeat their parts so that a classic should be saved for the nation.

It is not unlikely that Romney, Lawrence and Gainsborough

would be seen looking aghast and heard laughing loudly at the prices paid for works attributed to them by modern experts; some obscure paragraphist would, no doubt, confess that he was responsible for writing, and not the Iron Duke for shouting, "Up, Guards, and at 'em"; while millionaire and beggar, banker and share-pusher, hypocrite and honest ruffian would whisper of horses that had been pulled, fights that had been squared, markets that had been rigged, and of the many other soul-killing adventures upon which they had embarked as they played pitch-and-toss with eternity on their very short visit to this once extremely happy world. However, we must leave the many departed spirits to wander in their fruit-store, and, hoping that they will neither trip over pineapples nor slip up on orange-peel, let us step into the Old National for two minutes.

The National Sporting Club opened in 1891 and closed some forty years later; during the Nineties and years afterwards many of the greatest pugilists of all time battled there for world honours, content with purses that in these days would be considered absurdly small.

Its members may be well described as a collection of all sorts, composed of everybody who was anyone in the world of Sport and of many who, without wishing to be unkind to a multitude of good-hearted layers of the odds and hangers-on in the racing world, would not have been eligible for clubs usually frequented by the nobility and gentry with whom they rubbed shoulders every Monday evening, this being the night in each week on which championship fights or important contests took place. As a social rendezvous the National was not eligible, and though crowded to overflowing on the fight nights, it was, as a rule, used only by a comparatively small percentage of the sporting fraternity during the daytime.

The particular feature of the club as a building was the main hall in which the boxing took place. This was of oblong shape, and was capable of holding a by no means numerous assembly even when crowded to the last square inch, and this by men only, for women would no more have thought of watching a prize fight (if they had been allowed to, which they weren't) than any decent person not obliged to would have been anxious to be present at an execution. At one end of the hall was a gallery, at the other a fully equipped stage, behind which were the dressing-

rooms used by the boxers. On the stage itself were tiers of benches which accommodated pugilists, the friends of pugilists, and a variety of decently behaved riff-raff. On a raised platform, on a level and in front of the footlights, sat the time-keeper and referees, who from this point of vantage were able to look down and see all that was going on in the ring. The ring itself was not in the centre of the floor, being nearer the stage, and was surrounded on all sides by chairs, many of the ringside seats being reserved for life-members of the club who had paid a hundred guineas for the privilege of being elected as such. The chairs were occupied only by those whose names were household words in the world of Sport and Clubland. To enumerate them all would be to compile a miniature telephone book, and so, looking back through the mist of years, the writer contents himself with mentioning only those patrons of the noble art whose personalities impressed themselves upon a youthful mind. As the principal contest of the night was usually timed to commence at eleven o'clock, it is unnecessary to say that white shirts and black ties were worn by certainly a third of those who had come along to indulge in a favourite pastime. Of these, the outstanding figures were the Earl of Lonsdale, Sir Claude de Crespigny, and Sir George Chetwynd, for there was seldom a Monday night during the Season when they were not present. While Sir George Chetwynd, tall, slight and elegant, was the perfect type of a first-class Englishman in every way, Sir Claude de Crespigny, the famous father of gallant and distinguished sons, was a grand specimen of the British race. Bronzed, square-jawed and broad-shouldered, surely no more determined-looking man ever stepped. It is said that as Lieutenant of his county, the official being unable at the last minute to arrive in time for a hanging, he hanged the murderer himself. When well over sixty, on being heavily bumped into and sworn at by a porter of giant proportions outside the Tavistock Hotel, he taught the gentleman a well-deserved lesson by putting him "down for the count" in less than three minutes. Fortunate is a land which could boast a de Crespigny.

But while the National numbered amongst its members men famous in every walk of life, the Earl of Lonsdale was without question its uncrowned king. His word was law, and it was through his patronage and constant attendance that no place of the kind has ever been more wonderfully conducted or the

Queensberry Rules more rigidly adhered to. No word was permitted either of encouragement to or condemnation of the boxers while the rounds were in progress, and even in moments of intense excitement members would as soon have thought of playing the banjo in church as expressing an opinion in His Lordship's presence. This is by no means casting any reflection on the management of the club, for no officials could have been more hard-boiled, to use the expression in the best sporting sense of the word, than John Fleming the founder and the redoubtable Peggy Bettison who followed him, to say nothing of such dictator-like referees as Mr. Jack Angle, Mr. Gene Corri and Mr. Douglas. The last three were men who stood no nonsense of any kind from the boxers, and never hesitated to give the most unpopular decisions if they were convinced they were right. In the Nineties Mr. Douglas, who was the doyen of referees, was a grim figure and watched the bouts with a face as unfathomable as the Sphinx. He was the father of the British All England Cricket Captain, J. W. H. T. Douglas, who, owing to his stonewalling tactics in the Test Matches, was nicknamed by the Australian public *Johnny Wont Hit Today Douglas*. Alas, both father and son were drowned while returning from a holiday in Norway. Mr. Angle, himself once a noted amateur boxer, always looked as though he would have been quite prepared to take on both the combatants at once if they had not obeyed him instantly; and the genial Gene Corri, a jobber on the Stock Exchange, when refereeing did so with such enthusiasm that if circumstances compelled him to enter the ring to part boxers who were under the impression that it was their duty not only to hold but to kiss each other, the onlookers were never quite certain whether or no they were not witnessing a three-man bout.

No greater patron of sport in all its forms has ever lived than the Earl of Lonsdale, and one of the most coveted pugilistic trophies is the Lonsdale Belt, which he first presented to be fought for in 1900.

To discuss the merits of individual pugilists, compare the styles of men past and present, or argue as to which of any pair would have won had they met, is a thing which, even if the writer were capable of doing, he would, in boxing parlance, deliberately side-step. In the Nineties there certainly flourished many outstanding heavy-weights, for among them were to be reckoned

such world-beaters as J. L. Sullivan, Charlie Mitchell, Bob Fitzsimmons, Peter Jackson, Jim Corbett, Sharkey, Jeffries, Slavin and Kilrain. Though it is difficult—even impossible—to conjecture what sort of showing a Tunney, a Dempsey or a Louis would have put up against them at their best, still there seems little doubt that Peter Jackson was a truly remarkable man. Beautifully built, he moved like a panther, and with a punch in each hand that would have felled an ox, he was as quick as a feather-weight on his feet, while his rights and lefts came like flashes of lightning. In private life he was an extremely quiet man with the best of good manners, and several times visited Lowther Castle as the guest of his powerful patron. During his stay in England he was only once known to have lost his temper, and that was in the refreshment-room at York Railway Station when two racecourse toughs, refusing to cease using foul language in front of the barmaid, and, unaware of his identity, making an objectionable remark about his colour, he caught hold of them, slapped them soundly and banged their heads together. How easy it would be to plunge into descriptions of many a great battle at which the writer had the good fortune to be present, especially the fights between Fitzsimmons and Sharkey, and Corbett and Jeffries; but while no doubt a minority would be interested, the majority of readers would sink into that deep sleep beloved of many “a big fellow.” Still, the omission robs the boxing fans of little, for they can lay their hands on voluminous works which deal with the Ring and the “Tradesmen” who possessed long leases or short tenancies of 24 square feet of canvas.

Gone are the days when a pugilist never thought it necessary to look funny in dress clothes, and was content to keep both eyes fixed on his opponent and not on the man with whom he had discussed the value of the film rights. Gone, too, are the Monday evenings outside the once stormy Number 43, when the inhabitants of the Seven Dials overflowed to hear results and at their leisure contact the pockets of absent-minded sportsmen.

With what pleasure one remembers that in the Vintage Years semi-professionalism in amateur sport was quite unknown. American athletes were the first to make up their minds that to win at any cost must be the sole aim and object of teams and individuals, but in making training a full-time scientific job, amateur sport was robbed of half its pleasure for those who

followed it and had been content to see the best man win, and not a successfully manufactured human robot.

Cricket is probably one of the few games of skill which could not or would not allow an army of experts to make the lives of those who played it a burden. To many the entry of the Sports Specialist into the orbit of the amateur seemed like bringing a card manipulator to one's house to explain to Aunt Mary the way to deal herself a stack of cards so as to relieve Aunt Emma of her threepence a hundred at bridge.

However, all this striving through blood and sweat to achieve victory at any price has provided the country at large with considerable amusement when it reads the details concerning brawny stalwarts whose apparently only reason for being on earth is to hit an indiarubber ball over a string net with lightning-like precision, or to kick a leather one with accuracy into a limited space, much to the annoyance of a tall and generally gloomy-looking individual who stands sentinel between two poles.

If kite-flying and fireworks were thought to be the outward and visible sign of China's at one time supposed downfall, the wrapping of the athlete in cotton-wool is not a matter of congratulation.

In the Vintage Years John Jones, the centre forward of "The Mudcum-on-Slush Wanderers" was happy to be thought a hefty bloke who gave and received knocks without any desire to read in the morning papers that a bruised behind had caused him to spend a slightly restless night; but to-day John Jones of "The Mudcum-on-Slush Wanderers" is a very different person. Thirty thousand football fans tremble when they are informed that he has sprained the third finger of his left hand, and only breathe freely again when they hear that he is progressing as well as can be expected in a Portland Place nursing home, and that his diet has been changed so that Vitamin K may be added to the Vitamin H originally prescribed for him. In more recent years it was always heartening to learn that the champions known as "The Sheffield Blasters" had been taken for rest and recreation to Versailles prior to the Cup Final, and that the art galleries of Paris and its museums had met with the approval of "The Blasters," and had given them much-needed mental change. Many of them too, it is grand to be told, have discovered that chess is a decided aid to their tactics in the field, and that a course of Ruskin, Carlyle and

Froude have broadened their vision when discussing the qualities of the Oxford dons, who, they insist, must referee all First League division matches.

The Champion Boxers of to-day, it is gratifying to know, have all had "Infra-Red Ray" lamps installed in their hunting-quarters and are training on nothing but the best grey caviare and ortolans' tongues, both of which were of course the staple food of Sayers, Heenan and Jem Mace; while, again, the public are overjoyed to understand that a new mechanical device for the atrophying of the muscles in the forearms of certain jockeys has been adopted, so as to decrease the difficulties of an often bewildered handicapper.

In the Nineties the attempt to set up records and gain sensational victories was left exclusively to the professional whose recognized business it was, but, in remembering this, an amateur who was thought by men of sound judgment to have been capable of meeting and standing an extremely good chance of beating any contemporary heavy weight was Mr. John Hopley. A perfectly built six-foot-four South African giant, he was a beautiful boxer and not only carried a knock-out blow in both hands, but was in addition a great master of ringcraft. At one time it was on the cards that he might seek a meeting with the unbeaten Jack Johnson, but owing to the fact that during a contest he had the misfortune accidentally to kill his opponent, he took off his gloves for ever, and under no consideration could he ever be persuaded to put them on again. It is quite possible that had he not retired from a sport in which he was pre-eminent he might indeed have been a world champion, though it is very doubtful if so kindly and chivalrous a gentleman as John Hopley could ever have brought himself to step in and finish a beaten man, or produce that savagery which knows no mercy and is the essential and necessary part of every professional pugilist's make-up.

For anyone not intimately connected with the Turf to attempt to write on so intricate a subject as racing would obviously be futile. But as the Sport of Kings is as popular with the humble punter who backs his fancy for a shilling each way as it is with those who are rich enough to have overdrafts, and who, knowing all, bet all and lose all, to totally ignore the subject would be as ridiculous as supposing that the platinum blonde who is a dumb-

bell from her neck upwards is not more than a match for the shrewdest of men who, after having taken her out to dinner once and supper twice, enquires whether she has ever been in love before and if her mother lives in London.

Presumably, from what one can gather, racing has been the same ever since the afternoon when Nero, observing that the chariot on which he had risked his *denarii* looked like coming in last, shouted to his slaves, "All round again, boys." Throughout the ages the paddock had always been a whispering gallery where the uncertain have had "certainties" poured into their willing ears by a set of mystery men, who, of course, are on intimate terms with a cousin of a friend of a friend of the owner; therefore there is no reason to suppose that the Nineties differed in any great degree from the periods which preceded or followed them. Probably racing to-day is straighter than at any time in its history, and while there is no desire to doubt for an instant the absolute integrity of everyone in the Vintage Years whose bread and butter depended on noble steeds who, though out, were not really out on a particular day, it may perhaps be mentioned that of all the sea-shanties known, none was sung with greater fervour by those in silk jackets than the one which had as its refrain, "With a long long pull and a strong strong pull." It was at this time that an innocent little chemist appeared for the first time on the scene with a prescription he had obtained at the Cape of Good Dope. From the foregoing it can be readily understood, therefore, that the only thing that the amateur racegoer could be sure of was that if he obtained the best information possible, and followed it religiously, he would end up by knocking at his pet bookmaker's front door to beg the loan of a pair of socks.

This, the writer frankly admits, is all he knows about the Turf, but he is thankful for the many hours of recreation it has given him amidst, as a rule, charming surroundings in the company of good-hearted and delightfully optimistic people. In the Vintage Years, however, one very important thing, which even the most unobservant could not help noticing, happened, and this was the way; the seats of the mighty changed as completely as did that of the timid spinster in a tunnel when she discovered that a male stranger was mistaking her hand for his cigarette-case. This revolution was brought about by an American jockey of the name of Tod Sloan, who not only taught British riders to look

more like monkeys than they had ever hoped to, but in so doing gave them an opportunity of examining their own knees as they laid their heads lovingly between the ears of gallant animals who listened for the first time to orders which were more often than not entirely at variance with the purpose for which they supposed they had been trained.

Sensational happenings have always been the order of the day in the world of Sport. Of boxers who have been considered invincible, few have escaped their Waterloo. In rowing and running, age has touched countless giants on the shoulder. The colours of champion cricket teams have been lowered by opponents which were hardly considered worthy of their steel, and so on and so on, but it can be said with certainty that racing has provided more extraordinarily unexpected results than all other forms of competitive sport put together, and of such the Vintage Years had their share.

The happenings connected with the Turf which stand out most vividly in the mind of the writer, who round about the Nineties was a youthful and very unknowledgeable racegoer, was the winning of the Derby by a rank outsider in Sir Hugo, the romping home of Signorinetta at 100 to one in that same great classic some years later, and the staggering upset of all calculations when the famous and unbeaten Victor Wild broke down completely in the middle of the race for the Hunt Cup—to say nothing of the theft of the Gold Cup by a clever gang of thieves at Ascot, under the very noses of those whose job it was to guard it safely. When the news became known that it had been stolen the public were dumbfounded, but it was not long before laughter echoed throughout the country at the impertinence and daring of an adventure against the success of which, had a thousand to one been offered, it would have found no takers. I think I am right in saying that the Cup was never recovered and that the "Heads" who had engineered this Captain Koepenick-like exploit went smiling on their way.

The fashionable racing fixtures remain the same as when every horse ridden by Mornington Cannon carried the money of many a fair lady, for he was the racecourse *matinée* idol of his time. The only alteration which is noticeable has been brought about by the motor-car, which having made London so accessible, the house-parties for Ascot and Goodwood are not to the same extent

the whole-week delightful functions of bygone days. Ascot Week used to end on Ascot Sunday at Boulter's Lock, when this gateway to the upper reaches of the Thames was filled with beautiful women who made it look as if a hothouse had been raided and the petals of a thousand blooms cast upon its waters.

But while Ascot and Goodwood have lost nothing of their Garden Party atmosphere, much of the glory of Dublin Horse Show Week, the grandest fixture in the whole Calendar, has departed. The warm-hearted Irish people are still the same, and their witty tongues wag just as gaily, but the different conditions at the Castle and the Vice-Regal Lodge, to which must be added the financial loss caused by the withdrawal of British troops from the Curragh and elsewhere, has not made possible the happy-go-lucky spending of money, a thing which has always been one of the most delightful characteristics of this lovable and generous nation. It is possible for those who, in its gala week, were taught by Dublin that a laugh was the open sesame to all it had to offer, to ride again that thoroughbred "Sweet Memories" in a cavalcade of fun and frolic, but alas it must be many a year before those who follow them will ever gaze upon its like again. However, let us pray that this will ultimately come to pass, for then our grandchildren will see the same twinkle in the Irish eyes of those whose forebears stole our hearts away and held them captive till the anxiously awaited glorious seven days came round once more.

It was an Irishman who wrote: "Laugh, and the world laughs with you—snore, and you sleep alone." And it may have been this same gentleman who, on being reprimanded by a Police Court Magistrate, excused himself by saying, "I'm sorry, your Honour, but I was always under the impression that the sole purpose England had for making laws was to watch us break them."

Nature has been unfair in many ways as to the distribution of her gifts, but the unkindest thing she ever did to the world was to make a present of three-quarters of all the humour in her possession to the sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle. Who but an Irish lady, on being commiserated with that the horse she had put her money on had whipped round at the post and bolted in the opposite direction, would have said, "That makes no difference at all, I've backed it both ways."

Always brilliant, always apt, shrewd as the shrewdest, and delighting to appear slightly irresponsible, the Irish are jesters

who strike hard with their bladders of common sense. Is it possible to get a better answer than the one given by an Irish witness in an action for assault brought by a coloured woman against her husband? Defending counsel contended that the woman was to blame, but the witness, entirely disagreeing, finished by saying, "Perhaps they were both in the wrong, and in any case two blacks can't make a white." "You mean," said the man of law, "two blacks don't make a white." "Not at all," came the answer. "I mean *can't* make a white. If you have any doubts on the subject, just look at their children."

In having touched very lightly on one or two racing sensations of the Nineties, one remembers that the public were profoundly shocked by several tragic happenings about this time, the most devastating among them being the murder of William Terriss, the downfall of Oscar Wilde, the Card Scandal at Tranby Croft, and the conviction of Lord William Neville, which resulted in his being sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

On the night of December 16, 1897, William Terriss, than whom no greater favourite ever stepped as the hero of melodrama, was stabbed by a lunatic as he was entering the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre. Happily his death was instantaneous, and the only consolation for those who loved him dearly was the fact that he passed on as he would have wished, in harness and at the zenith of his immense popularity.

The poor wretch who, quite unaccountable for his actions, robbed the British stage of this handsome and outstandingly gallant figure, had been employed at the Adelphi as a supernumerary and in his diseased mind harboured the thought that it was Mr. Terriss who barred his way to triumphant success. Day by day and night by night he became more and more convinced of this, and so, envy turning to hatred, tragedy followed in its wake. To say that London was aghast at this unbelievable outrage would be to understate the case. The City was silent, the mourning was universal, and hundreds of thousands of its people stood bare-headed as William Terriss, who had meant so much to them in life, was borne to his last resting-place in Brompton Cemetery.

Of genius sentenced to a living death much has been written. The years march on, and may the softening hand of time smooth

out the blurred and crumpled pages across which is written the name of Oscar Wilde. He paid in full. Let this be remembered, and so, forgetting and forgiving going hand in hand, those who are yet to come can with unbiased minds judge him by his work alone and set him on what plane they will among his fellow-craftsmen.

Scandal as a round game, with no restrictions as to the number of players, has been popular—except with the deaf and dumb—ever since tea arrived from China, and even Sheridan, who played St. George to Mrs. Candour's Dragon, has failed to give its quietus to this pastime of the idle, the envious, the nit-wit and the wicked. How right, then, was the lyrist who in an opening chorus sung by Society folk suggested that all invitations to afternoon gatherings need no other description of the entertainment to be provided than

Tea and Tittle Tattle
To the pleasant rattle
Of the cup and spoon.

The majority of libel actions, no matter how sensational, have seldom been more than nine-day wonders, if that, but the one brought by Sir William Gordon-Cumming against his hostess Mrs. Wilson and others of her house-party at Tranby Croft lived as a sensation of sensations for many a long year, owing to the fact that not only were Sir William Gordon-Cumming and Mrs. Wilson well-known Society people, but that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was subpoenaed as a witness for the defence.

The accusation was one of cheating at baccarat, it being spread abroad that the distinguished baronet had been guilty of doing so. It was said that on more than one occasion while staying at Tranby Croft he had been seen to surreptitiously add counters to his original bet when he won, and to withdraw part of his stake when he lost. At first this was thought by those on a visit to the house to be quite incredible, but watch having been kept for two consecutive evenings and the information without doubt appearing to be correct, it became the painful duty of two of the house-party to tell him that he was known to be a cheat. This he indignantly denied, and the upshot of the whole unfortunate affair was that everyone concerned was bound to secrecy so as to avoid a scandal which, if it became public, would involve His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. A condition imposed on Sir

William Gordon-Cumming was that in return for silence he should sign a paper undertaking never to play cards again. This he agreed to do, and so closed the incident, as it was thought, for good and all.

A year later, however, the whole story leaked out, and as it was being discussed in clubs and drawing-rooms, Sir William Gordon-Cumming had no alternative but to bring an action to clear his name. It failed. Having signed a document which was practically an acknowledgment of his guilt, how he could ever have supposed he would succeed is difficult to understand. His answer was that it was the only course left open to him if so illustrious a personage as the Heir to the Throne was not to be dragged into a gambling dispute. Be that as it may, the verdict arrived at irretrievably ruined a gentleman who had hitherto borne an unblemished reputation. Even those who seemed to be absolutely convinced of the truth of the allegation and that the facts had been conclusively proved were shocked beyond words, and as decent people it is hoped were sad and sorry at so disastrous an ending to a man's career.

The frailties of human nature are legion, and uncontrollable impulse has often been found to supply the reason for some incredible slip on the part of a person with an otherwise perfectly balanced mind. This may have been the answer, but on the other hand there were many, including learned counsel, who never wavered in their belief that Sir William Gordon-Cumming was innocent and that he was the victim of a tragic mistake—an honest one, but a mistake.

In holding no brief for an old friend in the person of Lord William Neville, for he himself never questioned the justice of the two sentences of penal servitude passed upon him, it is permissible to say that while he was not insane in the ordinary sense of the word, he was definitely incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong and was without doubt on the border-line and much to be pitied.

His first unforgivable offence was that of obtaining a friend's signature to a paper which, purporting to be a perfectly innocent business document requiring the name of a witness, was in reality one which made his friend responsible for a considerable sum of money. His defence was that at the time he had no doubt in his mind but that he could himself meet the obligation when it fell

due, and that this being so, he looked upon what he did as purely a matter of form which would enable him to tide over a temporary financial difficulty. This, of course, being no answer to the charge, he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. He bore his punishment bravely, and on his release many of his friends, knowing him to be a person hardly to be judged by ordinary standards, stood by him so that he might be given a chance to re-establish himself. This in a degree he did, but living most extravagantly and again becoming pressed for a very considerable sum of money, he got himself into a desperate situation by doing as insane a thing as it was possible to imagine. Having pawned a quantity of jewellery, he arranged, as he was quite entitled to do after a lapse of time, to inspect the despatch-box in which it had been deposited. The pawnbroker sent a clerk with it to his Town house, and in the young man's presence the string was cut, the seals broken and the paper in which the box was wrapped removed. Everything inside being found to be quite in order, the clerk tied up the package in exactly the same way as it had been secured in the first instance, left the house with the jewellery, and returned it to the office from which he had brought it. Time went by, and when no cheque was forthcoming for the redemption of the jewels the pawnbroker opened the despatch-box, and to his amazement discovered that all it contained was a few lumps of coal. What had happened was this: Neville had made an exact replica of the original box, and having attracted the attention of the clerk for a minute had substituted it for the one containing the valuables. As before, the defence was that money with which he had hoped to redeem the pledges had not been received by him, and so, Fate having stepped in for the second time, he was sent to penal servitude.

Bill Neville, as we all knew him, lived to be an old man, and for thirty years after his second lapse led an honest, normal life in every way and during the first Great War worked unceasingly for the men of the fighting forces. That he was not normal is beyond all doubt, or he would never have brought such untold suffering on the sweet and wonderful lady who loved him and to whom he was devoted.

Of other sensations of a more violent kind about this time there were many, the Whitechapel Murders being the most staggering of them all. These ghastly midnight crimes were com-

mitted by some person unknown, who earned for himself the soubriquet of "Jack the Ripper" and not only caused panic among the poor creatures who walked the streets and were his principal victims, but so terrified respectable girls of the working class that during his activities, which continued over a period of nearly two years, they never dared venture out alone after nightfall.

Most of these dreadful outrages were perpetrated in dark and unfrequented alleys in the East End of London, and the wounds inflicted, similar in every case, were of such a savage nature that those who were attacked were never found alive by the police. This inhuman villain, who prowled by night, left no clue of any kind behind him, and as the women he killed were all chance acquaintances, Scotland Yard was completely baffled. It was at first supposed that a homicidal maniac was at large, but ultimately detectives were hot on the trail of a certain medical student who lived at Croydon, and had they been able to arrest him it is more than probable that the evidence against him would have put a rope round his neck. The wanted man, however, was never taken; he was found drowned in the Thames, and in his waistcoat pocket there was the return half of a third-class railway ticket to Croydon.

From the day of his death the Whitechapel Murders ceased, and this, taken in conjunction with the facts in the possession of the authorities, goes a long way to prove that the very astute members of the finest body of policemen in the world had succeeded in unravelling a very tangled skein.

In recording the foregoing stories one is conscious that they can hardly be described as things which made for the general happiness of the country, or that they were anything but the dregs of the finest Vintage, but as the most precious ointment is not without its fly, so it must be accepted that even well-tended vineyards are not immune, at times, from blight.

Bidding farewell to the Strand and the Garden, crowded as they are with memories, and for the time being waving an affectionate good-bye to the pleasant highbrows and knowledgeable thick ears, natural blondes and unnatural brunettes, who in the Vintage Years honoured an ordinary thoroughfare with their presence and in doing so produced for London a very delectable

Tipsy Cake, let us wander idly towards the one-time heart of the Night Life of the Metropolis, Leicester Square, to-day nothing like what it was in the Nineties when unchaperoned Cinderellas dropped their handkerchiefs instead of losing their slippers.

Time writes cruelly on the faces of men but the land withstands his onslaughts, and so in 1942 this busy district of 1890 has altered little. True, the statue of Henry Irving did not grace the scene fifty years ago, for it was not until the present century was in swaddling-clothes that the Abbey gave to this truly noble man sanctuary and sleep. It was in the late Eighties that W. S. Gilbert, of the tired eyes and ceaseless wit, embarked on the building of the Garrick Theatre. At one moment it caused him considerable anxiety, for he was suddenly informed that an ancient river trickled its way beneath the pick and shovel of the excavator. The great humorist, however, decided to allow the work to proceed, commenting amusingly that "he was for a time in doubt whether to continue the building or let the fishing." The Garrick Theatre fifty years ago was a very modern young lady when Sir John Hare, her first lover and lessee, introduced her to the Town. Her neighbours then are still her friends, and save for a Post Office and a Tube Station the only new-comer at whom she glances somewhat shyly is the Hippodrome, a house that boldly advertises in a blaze of electric signs twinkling stars, who come and go, many of them proud to know that if they have done little else they have at least served to light the tired pedestrian upon his way.

And now we come to the wide-open space hard by Leicester Square. In the days of that classic chronicler and exceedingly efficient civil servant Samuel Pepys, Leicester Square was a clearing ground, hallowed by the blood of excitable persons who had decided that honour must be satisfied. Across this clearing Pepys may have seen a Royal coach bearing a Merrie Monarch on his way to Drury Lane, eager to gather to his kingly breast the saucy orange girl who had become a star.

But as Time is a magic carpet that whirls the past into oblivion, we must forget the Squire of Dames and the other Charles who lost his head in Whitechapel and think of the moderns who were so anxious to lose theirs as often as they could in a nineteenth-century enclosure.

It seems almost unbelievable that so late as 1870 Leicester

Square was little better than an ash-pit and was the centre of a neighbourhood in which not only disreputable houses flourished but where it would have been unwise to explore unless in the company of a friend who could have been relied upon to give an extremely good account of himself.

In the Eighties, one Baron Grant set the Square in order and presented it to the nation. At the time he purchased the site there stood in the midst of its untidiness an equestrian statue which was constantly being tarred or otherwise disfigured by the bloods of the Town; this he replaced with the figure of Shakespeare which is there to-day. It is said that an incebriated gentleman, surveying the Bard of Avon through glassy eyes, on being asked by a passer-by whose statue it was, replied, "You must be ignorant, it's the bloke who bought the place."

Could Brompton or Kensal Green release from their dusty bondage late Victorian stalwarts who had known their Leicester Square and all it stood for, they would doubtless shake their heads sadly and sigh, "Oh, my masters, what a change is here!" On returning to its by no means sacred precincts they would look in vain for the Carnation Night Club, which once they knew as a rendezvous where pleasure-seekers of limited means could claim acquaintance with inexpensive Birds of Passage, while on its right hand, of doubtful cleanliness, stood the Alhambra, Britain's premier Home of Ballet.

A gaudy ancestor of the Alhambra was the Pavilion at Brighton, made famous by a wit who, on seeing its many little domes for the first time, observed "that it looked as if St. Paul's Cathedral had come to the seaside and littered."

While there were anything but Turks or well-veiled ladies to be found within the historic walls so long dedicated to the art of Taglioni, the architect must have surely sought inspiration for his elevation and decoration from memories of a cheap Moorish week-end in the hope of trying to convince the patrons of the house that with their stall and dress-circle tickets they were privileged to enjoy all the pleasures a Sultan is supposed to live for.

Like some brazen-faced hussy, this house was one that asked no questions. The popping of champagne corks was the unscored *leitmotiv* of a magnificent orchestra, and a questionable jest flung from a box often the penultimate line of a lyric. Here, every night was gala night for a well-dined majority, many of whom

were thankful that the glare and glitter behind the footlights did not interfere with their clouded, or soon to become clouded, outlook on Life, Love, and other things. This was the home of the gay ones and the irresponsibles, who were free from prying eyes, it being an unwritten law that far-seeing parents and short-sighted wives must look upon this Aladdin's Cave of Harmony as one for which they were on no account to try and discover the password.

One thing is certain, that the Alhambra reminded many men of their homes—it was so different. To-day, where once it stood in all its bizarre splendour, a tombstone of glorious respectability has been raised to its memory. The jostling crowds have vanished, and in their places a creeping company of enthusiastic film fans, silent and sedate, watch strange celluloid happenings both before and after tea.

Across the way a nightly rival stood, the Empire Music Hall, built in 1887 on the site of a low eating-house known as "The Shades." This haunt had as a clientele gentlemen and ladies who, although the forks and spoons supplied by the proprietor had "Stolen from The Shades" engraved upon their handles, made a habit of appropriating them whenever an opportunity occurred. Though quite alike in many ways, these "Sisters of the Night" were really as different as chalk from cheese, for however gay the Alhambra was reckoned to be, the Empire was not only gayer still, but was possessed of a more Debrettish atmosphere.

The Alhambra was the meeting-place of "all sorts," but the Empire was the annexe of London's smartest clubs, frequented by the best-known Men about Town, who scanned strange faces somewhat critically. By this it must not be supposed that the Empire was not an open-armed hostess. She was, but the members of the brigade of Impetuous Youth and the battalions of Discerning Age who enjoyed her hospitality were nearly all known to each other or knew of each other, while the majority of scented-sachet demi-mondaines who frequented the Lounge at the back of the Dress Circle were ladies of distinction in their unfortunate profession. Many of them boasted rich admirers and, being extremely well off, only considered granting their favours to a friend of a friend and would have taken it as an insult had a stranger attempted to pass the time of night with them.

The Empire Lounge was known throughout Britain and her

Dominions as a place where soldiers and sailors back from foreign service, or travellers who had not been in England for many a year, could make almost certain of meeting someone with whom they had been acquainted in the old days, and in this they were seldom disappointed. It was here that old friendships were renewed and long-forgotten comrades contacted, so it is not to be wondered at that many a wanderer found his way to the Empire purely in search of a perfectly virtuous evening.

At the same time, although the entertainment provided on the stage was of the highest class and one in which some of the most famous ballerinas took part, it cannot be denied without disrespect to many a great artist that the Lounge itself was not without its attractions for those on other kinds of pleasure bent. The management of the theatre was extremely strict, and seldom, if ever, was there rowdiness of any kind except on Boat Race or Derby nights, when the usual patrons wisely made a point of staying away. The attendants on these occasions used the greatest tact, and the "chuckers out," as some of these gigantic men in uniform were called, never, or hardly ever, used anything but persuasion to induce an undergraduate full of spirits to leave the building. There came a day, however, when a set of busybodies formed themselves into a League of Purity and decided that the famous Lounges at both the Alhambra and the Empire were citadels to which, in the interest of public morals, siege should be laid.

At first this Chastity Crusade was treated good-humouredly by the public, who looked upon its leader, a Mrs. Ormiston Chant, as a harmless crank. The whole movement became splendid copy for the caricaturists and of infinite value to the low comedians of the day; indeed, two most excellent actors, Mr. Harry Grattan and Mr. Fred Storey, took the town by storm with an impersonation of Mrs. Chant and one of her henchmen. They appeared as two kill-joys dressed in the deepest of deep mourning, and caused endless fun and amusement as a turn on the stage of the Empire itself. As a rule, ridicule will kill anything, but the tremendous publicity given to this moral movement attracted the attention of such a multitude of people who had never even heard of the Empire, let alone its Lounge, that a mighty army, composed of vote-snatching Members of Parliament, narrow-minded leaders of religious sects, anxious mothers, enquiring wives, inquisitive maidens, amazed hypocrites, and dumbfounded sufferers from

deafness, rallied to Mrs. Chant's banner and brought such pressure to bear upon those responsible for the safeguarding of the spiritual welfare of the most Innocent City in the World that the police, who, of course, up to this time had been under the impression that lemonade and chocolates were the only things sold at London's famous place of entertainment, closed the Lounge, which completely destroyed the club-like character of the house.

This high-handed proceeding very nearly resulted in minor Gordon Riots, especially when it became evident that all places where the light-hearted were wont to congregate at night-time would more than probably suffer the same fate. Before very long they all did. The most fashionable supper-haunt frequented by people of leisure was the Continental Hotel in Lower Regent Street, which, on hints from Scotland Yard, closed its doors, and many night clubs were also compelled to lower the lights which for so long had illuminated their crimson and gold furniture.

To the present-day Londoner this upheaval in the night-life of their fathers and grandfathers may appear a happening hardly worth recording, but mention is made of it because it must be remembered that, other than the amusement to be found in these houses of well-managed though potential impropriety, there was no night-life in Town of any kind.

The unchaperoned Society Deb. was unknown in the Nineties. The mothers had only lately stepped out of their crinolines, and as their offspring were compelled to wear wreaths of virginal lavender upon their brows, it will be realized that when professional entertainment was denied the robust Bohemians of the day, and the amateur not having quite decided that it was high time she ventured to try a love-set or two on Cupid's Centre Court, shadows fell upon the City which only disappeared when, in 1914, the War dressed man and maid in khaki and gave the latter leave to smoke and drink in public.

While no doubt the earnest souls, "prudes on the prowl" as they were dubbed, were sincere in their fight to hush midnight laughter and silence the communal clinking of champagne glasses in the West End of London, it is by no means certain that the set of legislators were wise in the drastic measures they adopted. They obviously did turn the searchlight of enquiry on to haunts which no one for a moment would claim as sacrosanct, but the hands that placed locks, bolts and bars on the front doors of certain

establishments caused all sorts and conditions of women to make the West End thoroughfares impossible at nightfall. Prior to the Nineties, our streets were practically free from these poor wretches, many of whom are forced by foreign bullies to live the most appalling and disgraceful lives imaginable.

The Law only succeeded in making the artificial gaiety of one place become the squalor of another, and this being so, the ridiculous Purity League with all its trumpeting really accomplished nothing. All it did was to compel, as it were, the drunkard to transfer his tumbler from his right hand to his left. The wine of life crushed from the grapes of the Devil's vineyard was, is, and always will be, of the same brand, and to imagine that it is possible to dash the goblet from the lips of those thirsty for doubtful pleasures is as futile as the adventure which that optimistic gentleman, King Canute, embarked upon at Margate. All he did was to get his feet wet and sneeze for a fortnight.

There were many other gay places where the night-birds felt the arm of the Law around their waists, and among these, from memory, it is safe to say that the St. James's Restaurant, in Piccadilly (now the site of the Piccadilly Hotel), known as "Jimmy's," must have been the noisiest of them all, frequented as it usually was by "youth out for an evening." As a matter of fact, though, comparatively few women were met with here, as it was more of a rendezvous for young gentlemen preliminary to or after an adventure. Many wild pranks were played at "Jimmy's," and pandemonium often reigned supreme when bright sparks, having turned the gas off at the main, proceeded to toss a couple of hundred hats to all quarters of the room. It takes little imagination to realize the number of free fights that occurred when the lights went up again and rightful owners struggled to regain their property. Many were the battles fought in a blackout at "Jimmy's," oyster shells and plates being the favourite ammunition. On these occasions shelter under the tables was the safest place, even after the barrage had died down, for more often than not fisticuffs were indulged in between the originators of the *mêlée* and those injured in the fracas. Any damage caused was always well paid for, and it was on very rare occasions that the police were called in to restore order; and when they did appear, friend and foe turned on the intruders, resenting the first cousin of a Varsity Rag-de-Luxe being interfered with by strangers in uniform.

There is nothing more difficult than to convey to another generation exactly what constituted the high spirits of Youth and the attitude of men of leisure in their fathers' days, as in describing their frolics gaiety may be mistaken for rowdyism, appreciation of good wine for drunkenness, and love given light-heartedly for definite immorality. However, one thing can be said with absolute certainty of the Toms and Jerrys of 1890: that however fool-hardy or reckless their behaviour, the passports they were granted for the purposes of enjoyment had the word *Gentleman* stamped upon the top, across the middle and at the bottom of these documents. There were unwritten rules for the game as played by them, and these were seldom broken, even on their wildest nights. Damage was paid for without demand, dependants compensated if anyone had been roughly handled, so that a driver of an overturned four-wheeler never went short of a five-pound note. The custodians of law and order too, who have ever been the legitimate targets of Youth on the Spree, were always well treated, and the attacks made upon them were really only sham fights conducted with rare good-humour. Such a senseless prank as that of climbing on to the figure of Eros and thereby jeopardizing an irreplaceable work of art was the last thing that would have taken the fancy of these young men. The charges at Marlborough Street Police Court or Bow Street after a noisy night were generally confined either to discussions with the magistrate as to why the golden wine of France having been too freely indulged in had resulted in exhibitions of the noble art of self-defence, or questions as to why certain young gentlemen had decided that Leicester Square was a Roman Circus in which to race "hansoms" against each other, after having placed the cabbies inside as fares. For the latter offence five shillings was the usual fine imposed, and this for having driven a hackney coach without a licence.

While the amateur on festive nights favoured Leicester Square, the Thames Embankment was known as the Cabmen's Race-course, for here no drivers of hansoms seemed able to resist the temptation of trying to pass one another at a good hand-gallop on their way to the City.

In these happy days time and wine flowed on, as no announcement of miserable Miss Dora's arrival at a maternity home had appeared in the Court Circular. A disgusting lady is this, the grandmother of alcoholic deceit and the authoress of a book of

rules designed to defeat ridiculous laws which any Government in the Nineties having introduced would have found itself turned out neck and crop by the blood-and-beef men, who, were they alive to-day, would have a few earnest words to hand out to the neutrals and the ninnies who mince their way through life. These were the days of real, honest-to-goodness vitality, there was nothing "naughty" about them—the word had not been coined except for nursery use, and any adult who had considered lisping it would have been well advised to have done so in the seclusion that his bedroom granted.

In the 1940's, when such a number of young men look almost as manly as their sisters and wriggle their dimpled way through life with a vocabulary consisting of little more than such words as "divine, devastating, too utterly ridiculous, too naughty for words, perfectly foul, so grim, psychologically no, definitely yes, actually," and a dozen other pieces of nonsense for which even a fifteen-year-old minx ought to be put across a mother's knee, it is a heartening thing to recall the fact that forty years ago none of this hot-making dreadful stuff was ever dreamed of. When those, therefore, who were lucky enough to have lived in times when men were all one hundred per cent. men are asked, as they often are, "Oh, but weren't there any precious youths at all in those days?", the answer is, "Emphatically no." That degenerates there were is undeniable, for there have been such people in every age, but in 1890 had they flaunted their ladylike ways in public as they do so unblushingly to-day, they would have been treated as the detestable creatures they assuredly are.

In the Sixties the Night Houses of London were still in existence and were, with very few exceptions, dangerous dens of iniquity; in the Seventies many establishments of this kind survived and were less disorderly owing to the watchful eye kept on them by the police; but in the Eighties they disappeared altogether, at any rate from the West End. In their place there sprang up the Night Clubs, and although not the sort of places at which one would have expected to meet one's grandmother or the village parson, they were well-conducted meeting-places in which the frail and fair forgathered to sup and dance with new acquaintances whom they at once decided were old friends.

To have the privilege of enjoying the amenities of these very slightly select establishments and to be within the Law, the gilded

youth of the day were not admitted unless they were members. To become one, it must be confessed, was not a very difficult matter; for a trifling consideration the hall porter proposed a new-comer, who was elected on the spot after having been seconded by one of the waiters. For obvious reasons the young Men about Town always wrote fictitious names in the candidates' book, and had the archives of the house ever been examined, many a bishop, nobleman, statesman, university professor and other distinguished person would have been mightily astonished to find that he had constantly danced and supped at clubs which rejoiced in such names as "The Corinthian," "The Carnation," "The Palm" and "The Alsatian." It is quite unnecessary to describe these places in detail; most of them closed in the early part of the present century, as hotels and restaurants with their music and dancing after the theatre proved rivals with which they were unable to compete.

It was the Nineties that opened the door to the luxury service which is enjoyed to-day, and the Eighties had to thank Monsieur Nicol for making such a feature of his cuisine at the Café Royal. He gave London perfect French cooking for the first time. He was reckoned to be one of the finest judges of wine in the kingdom, and his cellars becoming as famous for their rare vintages as were his chefs for their cooking, he was patronized by the world and his wife, and died a wealthy man. It was Mr. Nicol, I think, who in discussing financial problems and the small profit his victuals showed, shrugged his shoulders and exclaimed, "Oh, yes, it is true; they eat me poor, but they drink me rich!!!"

It was in the Vintage Years that champagne really came into its own, as prior to this time it had been the custom at dinner to serve a different wine with each course; this elaborate mixing of drinks remained the fashion only at City banquets. This, no doubt, explains the reason why those dreadful nightmares called Speeches have made even the gentle turtles welcome death. Portly gentlemen who are not allowed to express their opinions in their homes, and get their own back by mumbling platitudes to a hundred poor wretches once a year, are bad enough, but portly old gentlemen filled with sherry, hock, claret, champagne and punch are professional anaesthetists who could do splendid national work at our hospitals if chloroform ever ran short.

Kettner's restaurant, tucked away in Church Street, Soho, was

the Café Royal's only rival, and became nearly as famous for its food as Mr. Nicol's gastronomic establishment. This fact moved that great journalist, Mr. George Augustus Sala, to write a eulogistic column in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which he drew the attention of the public to the excellent food to be obtained there. His article was headed "A Beast at Feeding Time"; a framed copy of it may still be seen at this house, which was opened in the middle of the last century by the long-defunct Mr. Kettner. In both these restaurants there were private dining-rooms which enabled well-known people and exalted personages to seek seclusion when entertaining their particular lady friends, feeling safe and certain that their secrets would be well kept by *maitres d'hôtel* of the highest integrity.

However, the great and universal change in the restaurant life of the town occurred when there appeared upon the catering horizon a Napoleon in the person of the famous Mr. Ritz. It was he who, for the first time, made the British public décor-conscious, and also provided it not only with beautiful furniture but taught it how necessary silver, lovely glass and fine table-linen were, if perfect feeding was to be thoroughly enjoyed.

It was he, too, who, studying the psychology of his patrons, trained his waiters to realize that "The customer is never wrong." The Berkeley was the first restaurant to give separate tables to its clientele, the custom, even up till the late Eighties, being that those who lunched or dined did so at what may be described as communal tables, so Mr. Ritz must be awarded the highest honour it is possible to confer upon a restaurateur.

This is probably the Bombe Glassé or Orange Soufflé of the First Class—one cannot quite be sure which—but if there is any distinction he should be awarded both in recognition of his having taught Italian waiters how to bow and scrape with that sincere insincerity for which their race is now renowned.

The Hotel Bristol was practically the first place in which ladies were seen. This was in the late Eighties, for up to that time such a thing as a Society woman dining in public was quite unknown. However, as these memories of Vintage Years are not intended to be a register of hotels and restaurants, it is quite unnecessary to pursue any further the history of London's eating-houses, though in passing it may be noted that Verrey's, in Regent Street, was the only house to be patronized by ladies who were unescorted for

luncheon, and that Long's Hotel and Brown's were perhaps the best known of all the old-fashioned hostelries so dear to the hearts of the very precise and important county folk who made their annual pilgrimage to Town for the Season.

The laws dealing with hotels, i.e. the inns of England, are ancient and little understood by the present-day public. Many of the clauses in the Innkeepers Act were originally framed for the purpose of protecting and giving help to travellers who in bygone days were obliged to walk or ride long distances on horseback. On these often dangerous journeys they invariably carried their own food in knapsack or saddle-bag, and the law compelled mine host of the inn to cook it for them, if requested to do so, under pain of losing his licence. Unless, therefore, during the last quarter of a century this ruling has become obsolete, it is perfectly open to anyone to walk into the most fashionable hotel in the land with a chop or a nice piece of fish wrapped in the best brown paper and request the manager to roast or boil. There are, however, several other ways of becoming a real favourite at the Savoy or Claridge's.

In the Nineties the Amphytrion, the first club restaurant ever thought of in London, was started with a membership of 700 by Mr. Algernon Burke, in Albemarle Street. At the inaugural banquet His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales dined there with a party of fourteen of his intimate friends, amongst whom were the Count Denym, the Austrian Ambassador, the Earl of Dudley, and the Marquis de Soveral, the first Secretary of the Portuguese Legation. The last-named, a witty and delightful man, had the honour of being His Royal Highness's constant companion, and was affectionately known as the blue monkey, owing to the fact that he had the heaviest black shave imaginable. The cost of this dinner-party was £120, and the usual prices charged were so exorbitant that although the majority of the members were rich men the life of the Amphytrion was a short one—£10 a head being the average and ridiculous cost of entertaining guests on a special occasion.

Several other clubs of this kind were born to blush unseen, and it was not till many years afterwards that Ciro's and the Embassy supplied successfully the want Mr. Burke had envisioned as a need in the Nineties. A very exclusive and successful Cock-and-Hen supper club was the Lyric in Coventry Street, close to

the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and nearly opposite Challis Hotel, on the site of which Lyons' Corner House now stands. Of other clubs which flourished for a time and admitted on special nights ladies as Bohemian as their members were the Barn and the Pelican. The former was the rendezvous of sportsmen, musicians, actors, the high lights of the music halls, many men with plenty of money, many others who had reduced borrowing and forgetting to a fine art, and odd personalities, all of whom went to make up that strange mosaic of which the life of great cities is composed. The Barn was famous for its merry evenings, it being always crowded at supper-time not only with "the best and brightest" of the Town's night lights, but also with those whose names were household words in Theatreland. Here, as the hours wore on, it was not only the wits who lived on them that kept the ball rolling, but famous composers played their new works or favourite old ones; popular singers sang for the love of singing, and actors entertained each other, many of them being far more amusing off the stage than they were on it. In this way, night after night the impromptu concerts given by a band of exceptional individuals purely for their own amusement were of such quality and originality that they would have been impossible of repetition, even though a millionaire had forgotten himself and offered an open cheque to buy one of the few things in the world which is impossible of purchase—"brilliant spontaneity."

On the other hand, the Pelican Club in Gerrard Street, although a lively enough haunt, was of a very much more sporting character, founded as it was for the purpose of giving boxing displays. It was owing to the troubles that arose between the members and the committee concerning these fights that its career ended, and as a substitute the National Sporting Club was opened in Covent Garden.

One of the leading spirits of the Old Pelican, and its most unruly member, was a Mr. Abington Baird. It would, perhaps, be considered unkind to describe this notorious figure of the Nineties as disreputable, but on the other hand it would be difficult to find any other way of doing so. Millionaire, spendthrift, amateur jockey and the associate of prize-fighters, he was always surrounded by persons who, as his bodyguard, were paid to beat up anyone who opposed him in the many wild and outrageous escapades in which he continually indulged. Flattered and fawned

upon by his gang of toughs, he was known to them as "The Squire," and it is no exaggeration to say that after drinking heavily, as was his habit, he became Public Enemy Number One to all who crossed his path.

It has been said that there are few who have not their lucid intervals of insanity, and at times Mr. Abington Baird found himself behaving quite normally in the company of well-bred people. Once, when dining with Sir George Chetwynd at his charming house in Mayfair, the surroundings pleased him so much that he made his host an offer for the place as it stood. This suggestion Chetwynd laughingly refused, but so insistent was his guest, and so unaccustomed not to have his every whim gratified, that at last—the sum he was offered being quite fantastic—the popular sporting baronet felt compelled to accept an amount out of all proportion to the value of his residence. Later in the evening he went to an hotel, leaving Baird in possession of the house, and owner of everything in it. On awakening from a drunken slumber the next morning, Baird enquired of one of his satellites where he was, and received the reply, as he was handed his morning brandy-and-soda, "In your own house, Squire."

It is a miserable thought that his great wealth also enabled him to buy the companionship of Eve, perhaps the most famous beauty of the day. Sir Henry Hawkins, afterwards Lord Brampton, once observed that not ninety but ninety-five per cent. of the crime that came before him was caused by drink. It may well be wondered what percentage of female degradation this learned Judge would have thought fair to have apportioned to money. Possibly not less than a hundred per cent.

Eve seems to have been a brilliant exception, but probably only because there was no mint in her garden. That so lovely a woman and perfect lady should have sold herself with her eyes open and her heart shut to a man who was not fit to tie her maid's shoe-strings first shocked and then delighted the many who envied her, for they rejoiced that at last they could openly attack her, as she had delivered herself into their hands. No quarter was asked or given, and the once-friend of Royalty bowed her head to the storm.

It is true that the step she took made no difference to a large number of her own particular set, and this must have been some compensation, if compensation there can be in such tragic circum-

stances. But through her own stupidity she failed to reap the harvest due to her from having taken a step that had practically ruined her socially, and this evoked a certain amount of sympathy when it was realized how miserable and unsatisfactory was the ending of a much to be deplored bargain.

A note she wrote, perhaps the most expensive ever penned, cost her some two million pounds. During her unhappy association with Baird she met and fell in love with an extraordinarily nice man, whose friendship must have helped her considerably on the hard road which she had elected to travel. That there was any real cause for Baird being jealous is very doubtful, but he knew that she and her new friend were seen constantly about together, and this was the cause of a certain amount of unpleasantness between the lady and himself. However, no really serious trouble arose, and probably none ever would have arisen, had not Baird, just prior to leaving for New York, called unexpectedly at the lady's house. She was out, but on the hall table she had left a note addressed to the gentleman he disliked intensely. It was marked "Urgent and to be called for." Without hesitation he opened it, and read: "Thank heaven he sails for America to-day. I have gone to Euston to see him off. At last we can be together. Shall be at home for luncheon, etc., etc."

Baird put the fatal letter in his pocket, and on arrival at the railway station behaved as if nothing had happened, proceeding to Liverpool, where he took ship for the United States. It is to be presumed that the happy pair met for luncheon, the one thinking her note had been called for, the other having arrived by chance, being quite unaware of its existence.

Six weeks later Abington Baird died in New Orleans. With him were his usual party of "Mindors" as they were called, and conflicting and somewhat sinister stories arose as to the cause of "The Squire's" death. So enquiries were set on foot, which, however, resulted in pneumonia being given as the reason for his unexpected exit from this planet. Immediately on the news becoming known, aware that, as agreed and promised, the lady in the case was to inherit the Baird fortune, Eve communicated with his solicitors, and from them received a devastating blow. They informed her that on their client's instructions they had drawn up his will, in which his entire fortune had been left to her; that they had forwarded it to America, but although Baird had returned

it as perfectly in order, by some unfortunate oversight he had omitted to sign it.

How wise was Sardou when he said, "Never write I love you to those you ought not to; at best, it looks so cold on paper."

An even more extraordinary contemporary of the by-no-means-to-be-applauded Baird was a certain Marquess of ill renown. Thick-set, red-faced, heavy-looking, and often dressed in a grey box-cloth racing-coat with large pearl buttons, and on his head a cut-down top-hat with a curly brim, he not only looked like a cabman but delighted to appear a first cousin of that ancient "gawdblimey" class. His boon companions were, if possible, even more depraved than the thugs that surrounded "The Squire," and nothing pleased him more than to entertain these worthies at his ancestral home. To give some slight idea of what he considered to be his contribution to the life of Merrie England: on one occasion, after a hearty lunch, he arranged a shoot for his friends, which consisted of having every variety of the game on his beautiful estate driven past the dining-room windows. There sat his guests in armchairs, supplied with shot-guns and various weapons which they loosed off at everything in or out of range that passed them in the shape of fur and feather. Many of these ruffians had probably never had firearms in their hands prior to this sporting event (unless perhaps revolvers for midnight adventures), and without fear or favour they peppered the park deer, the humble rabbit, the timid hare, the ornamental waterfowl, and the longtails from many a covert. What the keepers thought of His Lordship and the beaters said of him in the village pubs must have been, in the words of the vernacular, "nobody's business."

That night, his friends, all of them having presumably by this time got their alcoholic eyes in, were afforded a further chance of exhibiting their marksmanship. Dinner over, rook rifles were produced, lights were placed upon the lawn, and the servants were ordered to bring from the cellars rare wines and priceless bottles of brandy, which were set up in rows as targets for potential winners of the Queen's prize at Bisley.

To any sane person these proceedings must appear as something akin to a madman's dream, and though they can hardly be called an illuminating part of the Vintage Years, they are chronicled as events connected with a figure who disgraced them.

His end was as inglorious as his fretful hour on the stage of life, for the Marquess, whose various titles took up nearly an inch of closely printed matter in the Red Book, was found dead one morning in a common lodging-house, over the water near Waterloo Bridge Road.

A sporting stormy petrel of the period was Robert Standish Sievier, known to everyone on the Turf and off it as Bob Sievier. Although during his life of ups and downs he was by no means considered, may it be written, the "glass of Fashion and the mould of Form," yet, whatever he did in his strange adventurous days, he was very many cuts above the two aforementioned impossibles. Buccaneer or brigand, he at least was a bold and fearless man, and in his heyday a very popular one with the lower classes. Born in a hansom-cab, he was, of his kind, certainly the most spectacular personality of Edwardian times, for not only was he the greatest gambler of his period—winning, as he did, £40,000 at *chemin de fer* in three days at Monte Carlo—but he also in a sensational Derby week relieved the ring of no less than £53,000.

In his racing days he had fifty horses in training and was the owner of Sceptre, the most famous filly in the world, for which he paid ten thousand guineas. She won four of the five classics for him, and when beaten in the Derby it was said that she had been pulled; but this was proved to be untrue, as it was one of the regrets of Sievier's life that the Blue Ribbon of the Turf had failed to come his way.

Whether as a millionaire or seated on the jagged rocks of finance, he was always undefeated, and it was this quality of daring that made a mob of five thousand people cheer themselves hoarse when he was acquitted at the Old Bailey on a charge of having demanded £5000 by menaces from Mr. Jack Joel, the African millionaire. He was not so fortunate, however, in an action for libel which he brought against Mr. Richard Wootton, the race-horse trainer, who in a pamphlet had, as Sievier alleged, called him a swindler and a card-sharper.

As the proprietor of a sporting journal, the *Winning Post*, he ran a weekly feature called "Celebrities in Glass Houses." This, as may well be supposed, led to suggestions that many well-known people who did not appear naked and ashamed in his vinery, a place where it is always wise to undress in the dark, had been forced to pay if they wished to be excused. It is true that at the

time he was proprietor and editor of this paper he was not the once rich Sievier of Sceptre's triumphant days, but this is no reason why so doughty a giver and receiver of blows should not be awarded the benefit of the doubt.

After having led a life in which he had played parts many and varied, for amongst other things he had been soldier, actor, playwright, novelist, journalist, gambler, owner, bookmaker, and had once even thought of standing for Parliament, he died in straitened circumstances in a small cottage at Crawley, at the age of seventy-nine.

He always described himself as a reckless man, but at the same time insisted that he had lived "a gentleman." According to his lights, no doubt he had, but it must have been an odd panorama of a kaleidoscope existence that at times untold itself before him in his last remaining years, one not only of storm, shipwreck and battle, but of memories of tremendous fortunes, followed by bankruptcies amounting to £216,000.

For the majority, old age would indeed be a hopeless adventure were it not that Time paints the past upon his canvas with a light and merciful brush, so that the once vivid "If only's," the "might have beens," and the "Why did I nots?" are colours which have long since faded on a palette which in the days beyond recall were the Crimson and Gold which made his pictures eager and living things. It is to be hoped that age dulled the senses of Robert Standish Sievier, or else how must he have suffered as poor and unnoticed he wandered about, borrowing and betting a sovereign or two on courses where once head high he had called in thousands for the odds. Whatever his faults, and they were supposed to have been many, there is one thing his detractors cannot deny—that he was generous when he "had it" and never squealed when he hadn't. His was a rough-and-ready wit, and the writer remembers hearing him say to a hotel waiter who was playing 1812 upon a dinner gong, "For heaven's sake shut up that infernal racket; those who are deaf can't hear it, and those who aren't don't want to."

Once, on being challenged by Counsel in cross-examination to deny that he was nothing but a gambler pure and simple, he made a most amusing reply. He said, "Gambler, *Yes*; Pure, *Perhaps*; Simple, *No*."

Of the many strange characters, and one of the executives of

the Old Pelican Club, a man who never had money but who never failed to find it by hook or crook, was Ernest Wells, known to the large circle he was always endeavouring to square as "Swears." Apparently genial and hearty, although known to be as wide as Hyde Park, he was accepted as the friend of all in a certain stratum of Bohemia, and was tolerated by the high-hatted male parents of many a rich man about Town, who looked upon him as a Father Confessor who could be trusted to introduce their offspring to London's gay days and still gayer nights, and having done so, steer them genteelly out of any conceivable kind of trouble in which they very possibly might become involved.

Swears's knowledge of human nature was crystal-clear, and as a profound student of both the Red Book and the *Police Gazette* he decided early that a fool and his money was by no means to be let pass by, while the double cross of a modern Crusader was something to be inspected with considerable care. His sense of humour was one of his great assets, and he never hesitated to describe a perfectly unmoral transaction in which he himself had been engaged as if it was the most innocent thing imaginable.

Once when a young blood approached him, saying, "Swears, I have been left twenty thousand pounds. Help me to become a moneylender," Swears whole-heartedly approved, as he said, of such a noble thought, and immediately proceeded to lend the young man's money at fifty per cent. to all his friends, who, as he jocularly put it, "could do with a bit." Needless to say, none of the capital was ever repaid, a circumstance which in no way distressed the philosophic Swears. All he said, in a voice that sounded like setting tea-things, when challenged as to the stability of the borrowers he had chosen, was, "Well, you see, dear boy; I know it's somewhat unfortunate, but if a gentleman born does such an unfair thing as to go into a low business sacred to the Jerusalem boys, whose ancestors invented a delicate operation the thought even of which cuts a Christian to the quick, he deserves to be punished."

That no brick wall was too thick for him to see through—is shown by the fact that on hearing at Longchamps from a nephew of Mr. Barney Barnato, the African millionaire, that a horse which his uncle had brought over to run in Paris had no earthly chance of winning, he murmured, "My word, is it as good as all that?"

and immediately went and backed it heavily. The animal won by a street, and as Swears afterwards remarked, "I received a little bit of sugar towards my winter keep."

It must not be supposed from the foregoing that the members of the Old Pelican were all of the Baird class; on the contrary, the vast majority of them were open-handed good fellows. Many of them belonged to the Eccentric, a wonderful club founded by the late Mr. Jack Harrison (one of the kindest men who ever lived), which has subscribed more money to charitable institutions and assisted more individuals who have fallen on hard times than any club, anywhere, at any time.

In the waning years of the last century England was proud beyond words of her Old School Tie. It seems incredible that to-day this emblem, which stood, and stands, for all that a gentleman should be, is held up to ridicule by an ignorant majority who are under the impression that all the mistakes affecting the well-being of the masses must be attributed to the stupidity of those who had the good fortune to be educated at our great public schools. However, as there is nothing easier than to be funny at the expense of anything, not excluding the foundations on which the British Empire is built, one can only be sorry for those who are satisfied with the belly laughs they purchase for ninepence from red-nosed comedians, or the rhymesters who are paid to write down to the level of the cheap guffaw. It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when the real significance of "the old school tie" will once again be appreciated. Then, perhaps, the unthinking will understand that men who are proud to wear the colours of their school are guarding jealously codes of honour which are the sacred traditions and the backbone of their country at its best. It is true that the day of a new aristocracy is dawning, the aristocracy of brains, and there is every reason to consider this a welcome change. But it is devoutly to be hoped that it will not encourage the butcher's boy to slap His Lordship on the back, however brilliantly he has learned to deliver the meat. Let the foaming mug of good honest ale be raised to the toast of His Majesty the King, and Vintage Port (if there is any) be sipped when the lights are low to the health of "The Duke of Lancaster, God bless him!!!"

Few of London's streets have so completely changed their appearance as Regent Street, and none has been robbed of its character to the same extent as this world-famous thoroughfare. Its outlines remain, but it is not the same beautiful Regency curve that years ago held in safe keeping comparatively low elevations from which many a delicate little iron balcony peeped out over its shops, period-proud of their architecture and mellow colouring, the whole completing a picture which might well have been stolen from the gentle city of Bath.

Regent Street, an exquisite lady, only granted to a very small minority of those who loved her the privilege of seeing her at her best, for this was at sunrise on a summer's morning, when no footfall was heard upon her pavements, no clatter on her fair-way, and, alone at last, she smiled good-naturedly at the top-hats and swallow-tails of midnight revellers who, having burned daylight, yawned their way homewards, later to shudder at the sight of breakfast and cry loudly for soda-water or Indian tea.

Still, though commerce has laid its vandal hands upon the frontages of her business premises, and encouraged the modern architect to design bizarre solidity and merry grimness as show-cases for its wares, the descendants of old-established tradesmen who flourished under the letters patent of a George are faithful tenants of the sites on which their ancestors earned a living. Welcome new-comers, of course, there are, providing new wonders in every form of merchandise, and the arrival of young and sprightly Mr. Jones, so up and doing, who has successfully ousted dear old Mr. Smith, is not a matter for vain regrets.

Of all the landmarks that have vanished, and they are not a few, perhaps one that the Edwardian would miss more than any other is the shop of the Stereoscopic Company which stood on the corner of Ryder Street, for in its windows he had seen photographs of all the famous Vintage people in every walk of life. Here Mr. Gladstone rested uneasily among a group of chorus girls, asking himself, no doubt, if they would like Home Rule, while near at hand Lord Tennyson, wrapped in gloom, seemed strangely out of place among the trunks and tights of gay burlesque. Delicious show-girls beckoned distinguished Churchmen to their side, and Consul, the human ape, whose intelligence equalled and perhaps was greater than many of those who applauded his tricks, wondered and winked at Mr. Darwin.

There was always a crowd staring at the familiar faces in the windows of this celebrated establishment, and a mixed crowd it was, for all classes of the community were catered for in those peak years of hero-worship. Flappers gazed with love-sick eyes at William Terriss as Romeo and Hayden Coffin in "Dorothy," while H. B. Conway and Kyrle Bellew, both of whom were the princes of their dreams, offered to become their very own for half a crown—which, it will be agreed, was a reasonable price for young ladies to pay for having the privilege of carrying off such handsome men.

Little children feasted their eyes on Harry Payne, who, with red-hot poker, proclaimed himself King of Harlequinade—as well he might, for the mantle of Grimaldi, the greatest clown of all, had fallen on his shoulders.

Schoolboys stood transfixed as they admired the prodigious strength of Eugene Sandow, the first man to open a School of Physical Culture in England, and were puzzled as to how Hackenschmidt had been able, with such consummate ease, to pin all other wrestlers to the mat.

Enthusiastic patrons of the old Gaiety Theatre stepped inside the shop to purchase prints of Nellie Farren as Nan or Ruy Blas, and did not leave, one may be very sure, without a photograph of brilliant Fred Leslie, her partner, in "Monte Cristo" and "Cinder-Ellen up-too-late." What a perfect genius was this, for not only as actor, dancer and singer in burlesque did he excel, but as Rip Van Winkle he charmed the Town when, prior to his visiting the fastness of Heindrick Hudson's Mountains, he told in song the children whom he loved that "Their little heads, now golden, silvered one day would be." This gifted creature and unique artist, whose place has never and cannot ever be filled, died at the early age of thirty-six. The lamp of his life burned too brightly, he literally killed himself with work and the pleasure he gave his friends, night after night, when the curtain had fallen, at merry gatherings, where he was always the central figure.

Who could resist letting their hands dive into their pockets to secure a memory of Marie Lloyd with which to brighten the dulllest room imaginable? What a personality she had, so subtle and so daring when "She winked the other eye"; so broadly comic when she insisted that she was "One of the wrecks that Cromwell knocked about a bit."

Or what collection would have been complete without the face of Vesta Tilley, who from the mantelpiece of many an undergraduate told each of them so roguishly to "Hold your hand out, naughty boy"?

Here also was Mary Anderson, whose loveliness called for a hundred different poses, each one more beautiful than the last; the best of all, perhaps, being as Juliet, in the protecting arms of Mrs. Stirling as the nurse, in Shakespeare's immortal love-story. As an actress Mary Anderson lacked passion, but to have been critical and said that she was not capable of throwing down the gauntlet to her greater sisters would have been as churlish as leaving unsung the pale beauty of the silver moon because one had lingered overlong to watch the crimson glory of a setting sun.

For those who revelled in classic melodrama Wilson Barrett, as Claudian and Marcus Superbus, called on the avenging Gods, in low-cut togas of almost censorable depth. In direct contrast to this noble Roman, John Martin Harvey was to be seen mounting the steps to that grim platform which welcomed Sydney Carton to eternity—a perfect actor, who, steeped in the tradition of his master, Henry Irving, brought to his profession, both on and off the stage, a rare dignity and singleness of purpose.

And were there any among the crowd who gazed upon this glorious company of players that could fail to smile at the mobile features of Dan Leno, a comedian of comedians, who, whether as a bedraggled huntsman who, as he used to say, "had taken a lick of ditch," or Widow Twankey, was "wont to set the theatre in a roar"? Yet although he was the embodiment of all that was grotesque, his early struggles had left the stamp of tragedy within a pair of strange, enquiring eyes which seemed to look out far beyond the world that held its sides with laughter. He had danced for pence, in clogs, upon the tables of many a public-house; he had starved in garrets, and slept in rain beneath the shelter of the bronze lions which stand sentinel before Liverpool's Town Hall. Notwithstanding a vitality out of all proportion for so frail a craft, he, like Fred Leslie, went to an early grave, wrecked on the rocky coastline of unceasing work.

Though not related, Neilson was the surname of two of the most lovely women who ever graced the London stage—Adelaide, of an earlier period, and Julia, of the Vintage Years, who married Ellen Terry's handsome brother, Fred Terry. He was a very fine

romantic actor and the best Charles Surface of his generation ; as Sweet Nell she captured the heart of every playgoer in the land.

In those windows, too, hosts of admirers saw sweet Ellaline Terriss, prior to many a triumph to come, sitting beside the fire in Cinderella's kitchen at the Lyceum Theatre, bringing to the heroine of Fairyland's entrancing tale poetry, gaiety and a winsome pathos all her own.

Space now bids us say "Farewell"; otherwise, to write of favourites by the score would be an easy task, especially as among them there would be dainty Mabel Love; Lily Hanbury, the most divine of women; Violet Vanbrugh, elegant and gracious as Anne Boleyn; Ben Davies of the golden voice; Irene Vanbrugh, climbing towards the laurel wreath which now is hers; that brilliant character-actor, Cyril Maude, with his equally famous and beautiful wife, Winifred Emery; Allan Aynesworth, and many another whom Edwardians would remember gratefully. It is difficult, indeed, to tear oneself away from windows such as these, for they are bordered by Rosemary—the sweetest flower of Ophelia's gathering.

In idly turning the pages which deal with the lighter side of English history, one is forced to come to the conclusion that the wives of monarchs a few centuries ago must have been extremely dull ladies, while the mistresses of some of those wayward gentlemen are always made to appear witty beyond belief and delightfully irresponsible creatures, ready, no matter what the season or the hour, to embark on giddy pranks in the hope of raising the laugh royal. It is probable that neither of these pictures is correct.

The wives, if the truth were known, had possibly been very happy and quite amusing girls until that fatal morning when three or four elderly greybeards of Cabinet rank informed them that a foreign prince, who had never seen them and whom they had never seen, was dying of love, and that a marriage had been arranged.

On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that the mistresses were not just as unfunny and tiresome as most mistresses are, or ultimately become, and that if their biographical pictures had been as faithfully painted as their faces, posterity would realize that most of them had been bored to death; but as admirable actresses they played their love scenes with such

passionate insincerity that those who had commanded their presence and given them orders to be affectionate were confident that, king or no king, they were the most attractive and fascinating fellows on earth.

Historians may, of course, be wise in having decided that these long-departed queens should only be written of as "great" or "noble," and that to put on record the laughter they created or the happiness they radiated as ordinary human beings would have been to place them in an undignified light, and it was therefore better their subjects should believe that even at meal-times they sat down with an orb in one hand and a sceptre in the other, and that they never dreamed of taking off their crowns at bed-time, even on the warmest nights.

A sad pity this, for it goes far to create an impression that they were only slightly more animated in the domestic circle than their portraits on a pack of playing-cards, and that their conversational powers began and ended with such epigrammatic and cryptic remarks as, "We are not pleased," "Arise," "Leave us," "Approach." How much jollier it would be if we were told, even if it were not true, that once or twice they had been heard to say, "Now then, Charlie, not all soda, please." How much more lovable, for instance, Queen Elizabeth, who looks in profile like a cross between the Witch of Endor and a stone quarry, would appear if we were informed that she had constantly beaten Drake at tiddlywinks, and had told Raleigh not to be an ass when he spread his cloak in the mud. How refreshing to hear that William had played Puss-in-the-Corner with Mary, and that Catherine Parr and Jane Seymour had adored a rollicking game of "Cat's Cradle" or "Touch Last." As it is, the world is left completely in the dark concerning these, the most important, episodes of many a reign; and indeed all we gather about so famous a lady as Mary Queen of Scots is that she seems to have spent her entire life dressed in black velvet rehearsing for the Block by continually kneeling at anything that had the smallest resemblance to a *prie-dieu*.

The homely glimpses, too, that we manage to get of the male occupants of various thrones are few and far between, for, with the exception of Richard the Third, who was the laughing blue-beard of his time, Henry the Eighth, who beat him by several short heads and made a habit of sending out announcements of his coming divorce with the wedding-cake, and Charles the Second,

who, among his other amorous accomplishments, was able to breed spaniels, little is known of the domestic side of our bygone line of Rulers.

It is true, of course, that the uninformed Guides who conduct tourists round places of historic interest are full of illuminating answers to questions concerning the private lives of the departed Great, and we are fortunate that from these penny novelettists much pleasant information is frequently to be gleaned. One of these fiction-writers at Hampton Court, however, must have been hard put to it when an American called out to him, "Say, Bo, where did these Wolsey boys get all their money from?" But no doubt he found little difficulty in convincing his listeners that Joe Beckett's family tree had flourished at Canterbury in the days when a Royal accessory before the fact had enquired of his assembled nobles: "Who will rid me of this pestilent priest?"

To deplore the fact that so little is known of how the Tudors and the Plantagenets behaved in their pyjamas and carpet slippers may appear an unnecessary digression, but it really is not so. It is designed to serve as comparison between the princes of yesterday, who ruled and stood apart, and that mighty figure His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, who was the very spirit of England in the Vintage Years. The Court of Queen Victoria was by no means a gay one. The Monarch's sorrow seemed to have deepened with age, and the devoted servants who immediately surrounded the throne were content to live in the shadow of a great grief. This gloom would undoubtedly have affected the nation as a whole had it not been for the Prince of Wales, whose pleasure it was to live among the people over whom he was destined to reign. As a statesman he understood them, as a man of the world he was well aware of their difficulties, and as a sportsman he shared their hours of recreation. In return they offered him their hearts and all the love that was in them, a real affection, it may be safely said, never before given to any British Prince.

It is no easy task to speak of King Edward the Seventh when Prince of Wales, and any respectful reference to this magnificent personage, whom the writer had the honour of serving on many occasions, can only be of grateful remembrance concerning very simple things.

While of no monarch was "Every Inch a King" written with

greater truth, it is almost impossible to convey to those who had not the good fortune to fall beneath his spell how dominant was his personality. None of the portraits, admirable likenesses though many of them were, suggest the physical strength and immense vitality which were the first things that definitely impressed those who were ushered into his presence for the first time. Had it not been for an irresistible charm and infectious laugh, well might the rugged power the years had given his kindly face, and his deep, almost gruff voice, have caused the stranger a not unnatural nervousness; but as it was, the Prince's gracious manner invariably smoothed the way and made everything perfectly easy for those, whatever their station in life.

Although His Royal Highness honoured a considerable number of distinguished persons with his friendship or patronage, his own particular circle, composed of a carefully chosen set of brilliant and delightful men and women, was by no means a large one. These in a way, it may be said, almost constituted a miniature court, for even when visiting Paris, which he was very fond of, or Homburg or Marienbad, which were his favourite watering-places, these intimate friends were those by whom he was constantly surrounded. It was at Homburg that the Prince was attracted to the very comfortable soft felt hats worn there. This trivial circumstance is only mentioned because once on his return from there wearing one of them it set a fashion known as "the Homburg," a name by which hats of this description have been called ever since.

During the limited leisure the duties of his exalted position allowed him, His Royal Highness enjoyed or took an interest in all forms of sport. As a keen yachtsman he never missed Cowes Week, and was usually on board the *Britannia* in all her races. As a patron of the Turf, among many other races he won the Derby twice, the first time with Persimmon in the Nineties, and later Minoru scored the most popular of victories carrying the colours of His Majesty. As a shot he was undoubtedly in the first class, although not so outstandingly brilliant as the Duke of York, afterwards our beloved King George the Fifth, who, it will be remembered, had few equals.

On many occasions the Prince of Wales honoured the first Lord Burnham by shooting pheasants with him at Hall Barn, Beaconsfield, and it was while as a guest of that wonderful old

gentleman that a quite amusing incident occurred. At one of the stands a young Guards officer, who was one of the house-party, was placed by the head keeper in the middle of one of the largest coverts so that the birds would rise well and break high over the line of guns. This youth, who was thought to be only a very ordinary shot, turned out to be an extraordinarily good one, killing rights and lefts and everything that came his way. He was, of course, quite unaware of the real reason he had been put ahead of the beaters, and never dreamed that he was placed in the proud position of a glorified stop. The consternation he caused can be well imagined when, instead of the birds sailing out into the open, well up over the Prince of Wales, a large majority of them came crashing down within a few yards of where His Royal Highness was standing. Unable to make out what was happening, the keeper dashed into the drive where he had left our hero, to discover him in his shirt-sleeves, with two loaders, having the time of his life. That night at dinner, when the situation was explained, no one laughed more heartily than the Prince himself, for he had a grand sense of humour and little escaped him.

A story which he was pleased to tell against himself was extremely funny, and it was given me first-hand. It concerned an over-enthusiastic gillie who was in attendance on the Prince when salmon-fishing in Scotland. From a point of vantage on the far side of one of the pools, the man saw a fine fresh-run fish moving directly in front of his Royal Master. He explained exactly its position and where it would be likely to take. At the Prince's first cast the excited gillie called out approvingly, "Magnificent, Your Royal Highness"; "Another yard, Your Royal Highness"; "Perfect, Your Royal Highness"; "A wee bit to the right, Your Royal Highness"; "Grand, Your Royal Highness"; "Another foot, Your Royal Highness"; "You're over him, Your Royal Highness"; "Magnificent, Your Royal Highness";—(The fish rose)—"Now, then, Your Royal Highness . . . Ah! You've missed him, you stupid devil."

Lord Marcus Beresford, who trained for the Prince, was a great favourite of his, and of his fund of stories one which this popular personality told of his celebrated sailor brother, Lord Charles, amused the Prince very much.

It appears that when Lord Charles Beresford went to sea for the first time he was sent for by his Commander and told to work

out the position of the ship, which had been at sea nearly a fortnight. It was a difficult problem for a little boy, but quite undaunted he tackled the job with the utmost confidence and returned an hour later with a detailed report. The Captain looked at it carefully and then immediately sprang to attention and saluted. "Why are you saluting me, sir?" enquired the future officer of "Well done, *Condor*" fame. "I'm not saluting you, my boy, I'm saluting Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria." "Why, sir?" "Well, because on your reckoning the ship is right in the middle of Windsor Castle!"

On the Prince of Wales's accession to the throne His Majesty was the first crowned head to be photographed in a motor-car. The picture was taken outside the bungalow built by Lord Montagu at Sowley, near Beaulieu, and Lord Montagu was in the driver's seat. I cannot remember whether the car was a Darracq or a Renault, but it was a comical little affair, although at the time it was considered to be the last word in luxurious novelty.

As a playgoer, no one loved the theatre more than His Royal Highness, who always made a point of going to every piece worth seeing. However, it was not only the established successes that he patronized, for many a time, purely out of kindness of heart, he visited productions which, although possessed of certain merit, were not doing too well, in the hope that when the newspapers chronicled the fact, as they always did, that Royalty had been to see them, the public would in all probability follow suit. This proved to be true, and very often theatres which would have been obliged to close took on a new lease of life owing to this generous and princely gesture. Seldom did our future King visit a theatre without sending for one or two of the principal players to come to his box, and many a time if he recognized some old actor or actress playing a minor part, they were also summoned to hear words of encouragement which this great human being knew would help them on the difficult road they probably were travelling. If anything particularly moved or amused the Prince during the action of a play, he had a habit of showing his appreciation by commenting quite audibly to those who were privileged to be his guests, a thing which at times was a little disconcerting for the people on the stage. On the other hand, anything of a questionable nature displeased him intensely, while any allusion to the Royal Family, however innocuous, was immediately

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deleted by order of the Lord Chamberlain. In the Nineties there was nothing approaching the licence permitted to-day in the theatre, and the bad language and vulgarity so unnecessary and now unfortunately so common were not tolerated.

Several command performances were given at Sandringham in the Vintage Years, and the writer had the honour of appearing there with the Vaudeville Theatre Company in "The Christmas Carol" on the occasion of the birthday of Princess Maud, later the Queen of Norway. During the evening Ellaline Terriss played in a light comedy and sang several of the songs she had made famous, and the entertainment was carried shoulder-high to success by Dan Leno, who convulsed the Prince and the entire audience with his inimitable patter describing his adventures in the hunting-field, and his endeavours to obtain refreshment when conducting a party of sight-seers round the Tower of London.

Private performances by professional actors at Windsor Castle had been few and far between during the later years of Queen Victoria's reign, though at times Her Majesty enjoyed the acting of distinguished amateurs, among whom the Princess Beatrice was a most accomplished player. The last professional performance commanded by the Queen was that of Lord Tennyson's play "Becket," when Sir Henry Irving, accompanied by Miss Ellen Terry and Mr. William Terriss and the Lyceum Company, appeared before her. For this single performance Sir Henry Irving duplicated his London scenery in every detail so as to meet the requirements of the naturally limited space at his disposal.

Shortly after the Prince of Wales's accession, the King of Portugal visited England, and the first State performance for many years was given at Windsor. The play chosen for this theatrically historic event was "Quality Street," by J. M. Barrie, and the writer had the honour of appearing at the Castle with the Vaudeville Theatre Company in this great author's delightful piece.

The performance took place at ten o'clock at night in the Waterloo Chamber, before Their Majesties the King and Queen, the Duke and Duchess of York, the entire Royal Family, the King and Queen of Portugal, the Court, and all the most notable personages in the land. For splendour the picture may perhaps have been equalled, but certainly never surpassed.

When the curtain fell, Miss Marion Terry, Miss Ellaline Terriss, Miss Rosina Filippi, Miss Henrietta Watson, Mr. Vane Tempest

and Mr. Shelton were complimented by Their Majesties on the excellence of their individual performances. The King, who was in high good-humour, noticing the whiskers I wore in the play, said, "I hope, Mr. Hicks, you do not wear whiskers in private life." I assured His Majesty that I did not. "It's just as well," he laughed. "You'll never be a success with the ladies if you do."

A State Ball followed the play, and orders were given that Miss Terry, my wife and myself should have chairs placed at the end of the Ball Room to see the Cotillion, which was led by King Edward and the Queen of Portugal, followed by Queen Alexandra and the King of Portugal. The scene was magnificent, beyond words.

A happy and memorable visit to Windsor Castle ended by Queen Alexandra sending for Miss Terriss the following morning. Her Majesty had celebrated her birthday two days previously, and she gave her a large portion of her birthday cake to be distributed among the children who were appearing in the production. To-day these children are now nearly fifty years of age. They did not eat that cake, it was kept by them as a precious souvenir.

That Sir James Barrie's "Quality Street" was selected for the King's pleasure was largely due to Lord Esher. In this brilliant, generous and kindly patron the writer and his wife possessed a staunch and affectionate friend to whom they were devoted. For over thirty years he ungrudgingly gave them his powerful aid and wise counsel, for which they were and will be for ever grateful.

When Viscount Esher was given rest, one of the greatest and best-loved figures of Edwardian days was mourned, not only by those in high places but by a legion of the humble, who will wear him in their hearts for all time.

And now "The Lights burn blue" and the well of my memory runs dry.

In asking forgiveness that at times I have referred to myself as "the writer," please believe me when I say that I lay no claim to such distinction. The term was used so that the personal pronoun, so beloved of the pompous, might be avoided. When first we met I raised my hat and called you *gentle* reader; in bidding you good-bye I bare my head again, and thank you,

patient reader, for having allowed me to ramble on so leisurely and so long.

May I hope you have not been wearied and that I have not fallen between two stools: one of Remembrance, on which "Age" is resting; the other fashioned by "Youth," from which it welcomes Spring in blossom-time and pays no heed to harvests gathered yesterday.

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